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A SERIES OF DISSERTATIONS  
ON THE  
*Doctrines of the Bible;*  
FORMING A  
CONCISE AND COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM  
OF  
CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY.

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BY  
JAMES GARNER,  
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL

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"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so."—Acts xvii. 11.

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AND ALL BOOKSELLERS.

1859.

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## PREFACE.

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IN perusing the following Dissertations the theological student will perceive that the Author, in illustrating the Divine Attributes, neither affects nice metaphysical distinctions, nor makes pretensions to such an elaborate analysis of the perfections of Deity as is generally adopted by professors of theology in a course of lectures on these subjects. Those who wish to gratify their critical curiosity therein, may consult the philological and exegetical disquisitions of Dr. Pye Smith, Dwight's and Stackhouse's Body of Divinity, the various Systems of Theology by Dr. Wardlaw, Dr. Leonard Woods, and Professor Finney, R. Watson's and Dr. Chalmers' Institutes, and other learned authors, who have discussed these subjects with great care and philosophical nicety.

The design of the Author in publishing his views on the *Doctrines of Christian Theo-*

*logy*, is to contribute assistance to junior Ministers, and those especially, who belong to the same religious community as himself, *and other theological readers*, in obtaining a correct knowledge of the Christian System; more particularly in relation to doctrine and religious experience.

The necessity of such a work may be questioned by many, seeing there are already in the market a large supply of works of a kindred character, many of which possess considerable merit, and are suitable to almost every class of mind. The Author begs, notwithstanding, distinctly to remark that many Systems of Divinity are too learned and elaborate for common readers. They are the productions of classic and highly cultivated minds, and, of course, are of high literary merit; but they are suitable for such theological students only as are graduating under the tuition of able professors. To such they afford considerable facility in the attainment of sacred knowledge; but they are not suitable either for *general readers*, or for young men who have laboured under the disadvantages of a limited education, and are called, before going through a series of studies,

to minister in holy things, and to explain the sublime mysteries of revealed religion. An easy method of obtaining a correct knowledge of the rudiments and essential principles of the Christian religion is to them of great importance; and to afford them ready assistance is the principal design of the Author.

With this object in view he has endeavoured to bring out a plain and comprehensive system of Christian Theology. At the same time he has endeavoured to provide for the intellectual and religious improvement of the many thousands of "LOCAL PREACHERS" whose opportunities of mental cultivation and advancement in the science of Theology are generally limited.

With regard to the originality of the work it may be remarked,

1. That the Author has availed himself of the assistance of many eminent divines, to whom his obligations are acknowledged in the usual way. In other instances he has adopted their sentiments, but has expressed them in his own language.

2. Many sentiments may be expressed in language similar to that which is found in

other theological works, which are not marked with inverted commas, as the Author, in the course of his reading, has become so familiar with such modes of expression that he may have inadvertently mixed them up with his own thoughts and language. But in this feature of composition there is nothing peculiar. The work, in the judgment of the Author, possesses as much originality, both in thought and language, as do most productions of this kind.

3. The arrangement of the subjects which are treated on, the Author believes to be preferable to most works of this kind. His object has been to enable the reader to go through a systematic and logical, but very simple, course of study on those subjects which relate to a knowledge of God; the character of the Saviour; the Holy Trinity in Unity; Man, his original state, his fall, his salvation and restoration by Christ; and to the general leading and fundamental doctrines which are set forth in God's most Holy Word. These subjects are taken up and discussed in regular order. On some subjects the attentive reader will observe that the arrangement is not in

exact accordance with the plans generally adopted by writers on systematic theology; but these slight innovations are not of any vital importance. The object aimed at is *distinctness*. For this reason, those benefits of the atonement which are designated “the concomitants of justification,” such as Imputed Righteousness, Regeneration, Adoption, &c., and the conditions on which man receives the blessings of salvation, are considered *separately*; at the same time the intelligent reader will readily discover their relationship and essential connection with each other. The Dissertation on God’s Moral Government is placed last, because it takes in man’s accountability, the final judgment, and future rewards and punishments.

4. On those subjects and points of doctrine on which great and good men have seen reason to differ, the Author, after having carefully consulted the opinions of some of the best writers on such subjects, has been mindful to express himself with becoming modesty and discrimination, so as not wilfully or carelessly to give offence to any party; at the same time he has laboured to set forth, in a clear



and forcible manner, those truths which he believes to be in harmony with the Word of God, leaving every candid and intelligent reader to judge and conclude for himself.

THE AUTHOR.

LIVERPOOL, *July*, 1859.

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### II. *On the Eternal Existence and Essence of Deity.*

The eternal existence of God implied in the first assertion of the Bible. Only one God, but the original word denotes a plurality. Trinity in unity. What is meant by the word *person*. The eternity of the Divine existence incomprehensible. God is infinite. The study of natural philosophy of importance. The Bible is a comment on nature. The significant names of the Supreme Being. God is a Spirit—a pure, infinite Spirit—a Being of indescribable majesty and glory. God is invisible: several passages on this subject examined. God is an *eternal Spirit*. None but God is eternal. Matter is not eternal.

### III. *On Creation.*

Nothing eternal but God. God is the Creator of all things in the universe, whether material or intellectual. The manner in which God brought the material universe into existence. Creation, a grand and sublime subject. The vastness of Creation in relation to both matter and mind. All Creation

*Divinity of Christ.—Second argument : On “The Word.”*

“The Word” means Jesus Christ. Some writers think that St. John borrowed the term “Logos” from Philo, or from the Chaldee Paraphrases, or from the Hellenists. The Hebrew phrase “Debar Yehovah,” and the Greek word “Logos kuriou.” Debar Yehovah frequently mentioned in the old Testament, and evidently means a personal Word. The Memra, in Chaldee, means “The Word.” The Memra frequently mentioned by the Targumists. Quotations from the Rev. W. Cooke’s Explanation of the Targums. The testimony of Philo. Quotations from Irenæus ; Theophilus of Antioch ; Tertullian ; Clemens Alexandrinus ; Athenagoras, and Melito—Arius and Unitarianism. “The Bibliotheca Fratrum.” Unitarian and Trinitarian Authors. The conclusion : “The Word” is one eternally with the Father.

*Divinity of Christ.—Third argument : On Scripture Declarations.*

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*Divinity of Christ.—Fourth argument : On the Attributes of Christ.*

Christ is Eternal and Immutable. He is Omnipotent. He is Omniscient. He is Omnipresent. Christ demands and receives divine honour which belongs exclusively to God ; hence He is one unitedly with the Father.

*Divinity of Christ.—Fifth argument : On the Miracles of Christ.*

What a miracle is. The peculiar manner in which Christ performed His miracles. His miracles were displays of His benevolence. The miracles of Christ were wrought in confirmation of pure and holy doctrines. They were performed publicly. They were numerous. They were capable of investigation. The object of Christ in performing His miracles. The evidence we have of His miracles. The character of the Apostles who bare testimony to His miracles. They are entitled to our confidence.

*Divinity of Christ.—Sixth argument : On the Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Christ.*

Christ in Gethsemane. He dies on the cross. His promise to the dying thief. The soldiers pierced His side after he was dead. He is buried, and secured in the tomb. The military guard keeping the sepulchre. His resurrection. Shews Himself several times to His disciples. Christ and His disciples on Mount Bethany. Scenes and reflections. He majestically ascends through the air. He is seated at the right hand of God the Father.

IX. *On the Sonship of Christ.*

Various opinions on the doctrine of the Sonship. Dr. A. Clarke’s opinion strictured by several Wesleyan Ministers. Observations on their strictures.

Mr. Wesley on Heb. i. 5. Armenian Magazine. Dr. Clarke's remarks on Wesley's opinion. Imperial Magazine admits of discussion on this subject. The "Eternal Sonship" is a philological question, rather than doctrinal. Albert Barnes on several passages which relate to the Sonship of Christ. The phrase, "*Son of God*," refers to His human and divine natures, unitedly considered. Remarks on Mr. Benson's comment on Heb. i. 2. Dr. J. Pye Smith on the Sonship. Summing up of the arguments, and conclusion. Treffry on the Sonship.

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### XI. *Trinity in Unity.*

The doctrine of the Trinity in Unity is a mystery which the human mind cannot fully comprehend. Observations on German Neology; its dangerous tendency to infidelity. The folly of rejecting a doctrine on the grounds of its incomprehensibility. The physical universe is incomprehensible, yet we know it exists. The word Trinity is not a biblical expression, but the doctrine is implied in several passages of Scripture. There is a plurality of persons in the Godhead. The opinions of Dr. A. Clarke and Simeon Ben Joachai on the word Elohim. The pronouns *us* and *our*, as used by God, clearly express plurality. Various passages of Scripture considered. The Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son. The Son proceeds equally from the Father and the Holy Ghost. The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, have essentially the same properties and attributes ascribed to them. The Father and the Son are contained in the Holy Spirit. The *unity* of three persons in the Godhead, proved by a collation of the foregoing facts and arguments.

### XII. *On Man: His Origin.*

We are indebted to Revelation for our knowledge of the origin of the human race. All theories, apart from Revelation, on this subject, are chimerical and groundless. All mankind spring from the same original parent, however they may differ in their circumstances, or in their physical and intellectual peculiarities. A classification of the various families and tribes of mankind. The creation or original formation of the human body: "Let us make man."



What this form of speech imports. The materials of which the human body was originally composed. The manner in which the Almighty raised the human system—gradually or instantaneously. The superiority of man, in his original state, compared with the other objects of the visible creation. The creation of man a glorious work, and displays the power, goodness, and wisdom of God. The laws of preservation, &c., incorporated in man's physical nature. The creation of the human soul. In connection with man's corporeal nature, there is a rational and immortal nature, called "*the soul*." The soul is not a part of God, neither was it composed of any pre-existing, refined atoms of matter, but *created* by God: "God breathed into man," &c. What is meant by this figurative expression. Parkhurst and Dr. A. Clarke on the word "*soul*." Man was originally in the image and likeness of God. What we are to understand by the resemblance to Deity. The idea expressed by *Ovid* in reference to the human body. The likeness of God refers more particularly to the moral resemblance of the soul to God, which consisted in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness. The happiness of our first parents while they retained their original state.

### XIII. *On the Fall of Man from his Original Condition.*

How long man continued in his original state. Man is evidently a fallen being. Various theories in reference to the fall. Man was originally in a state of trial, consequently a moral and accountable agent. The origin of moral evil, a profound and mysterious subject. The reflections on this subject by Professor Dwight, sublime and plausible, but in some respects objectionable. Dr. J. Pye Smith's views. God cannot be the author of sin. Reasons why God does not prevent sin. Mr. Law's notions contain nothing new, and are objectionable. References to King, Clarke, and Stackhouse, on the origin of Sin. The fall of man was occasioned by a violation of the Adamic Covenant. The real agent of the temptation was a fallen Angel; the instrumental agent, a Serpent. Various opinions of the learned as to what kind of a creature the Serpent was. The radical import of the Hebrew and Arabic words which are translated *serpent*, by Dr. A. Clarke. The Mosaic narrative of the fall carefully and critically considered. The character of the temptation. The peculiar notions of some Jewish Authors respecting the first temptation. The fatal deed. The ruinous consequences. The conduct of Adam and Eve after they had sinned. Commentary on this subject often false and erroneous.

### XIV. *The Consequences of the Fall.*

Some of the consequences were immediate. The whole human race fell in Adam. The importance of this doctrine in relation to the universality of the atonement. The curse pronounced on Adam; he is doomed to labour and

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#### XV. *Man's Restoration and Salvation.*

Man cannot by any means restore himself. Human redemption not the work of Angels, or of any created beings. Christ the only Saviour of the world. Atonement, Propitiation, Redemption, and Reconciliation. Was it absolutely necessary that Christ should die? History of Redemption. To what extent Redemption was made known to the Antideluvians. Abel's offering. Animal sacrifices considered. Vicarious sacrifice. Jewish sacrifices were typical of Christ's. "The fulness of time" considered.

#### XVI. *Redemption by Christ.*

It was necessary that the Saviour should be a perfect man. The Redeemer must shed his blood and die. The Saviour's humanity clearly asserted in Scripture. His Divinity also predicted. The doctrine of the Cross implies a vicarious sacrifice. The death of Christ an act of obedience—voluntary. The death of Christ abolished legal and typical sacrifices. The death of Christ confirmed the new Covenant and superseded the old one. The atonement made by Christ manifests the justice of God. The burial of Christ's body a fulfilment of divine prediction, and proved the reality of his death. The manner in which he was buried. His burial a proof of his humility. The resurrection of Christ demonstrated him to be the Son of God—an earnest of the general resurrection. The resurrection of Christ has been disputed and denied. It is an historical fact that his grave was found empty; how is this to be accounted for? Quotation from Saurin. Testimony borne to the resurrection of Christ. The validity of this testimony. The resurrection of the Saviour a glorious miracle.

### XVII. *Did Christ Descend into Hell?*

The idea of Christ's human soul descending into hell, is merely a human opinion. Some ancient divines believed this doctrine. Ancient opinions on this subject considered. The opinions of Rufinus and Vossius. When and how the notion originated. The phrase, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," examined. The opinions of Beza and Witsius on this passage considered. Mr. Wesley's opinion, as expressed in his "Notes on Acts iii. 27." Christ's "preaching to the spirits in prison," examined. The opinions of Bishop Horsley and W. Carpenter on this passage, not scriptural. What appears to be the true meaning of "Christ preaching to the spirits in prison." The notion held by many Protestant theologians, confused and incorrect. The doctrine of Purgatory is derogatory to Christ, and incompatible with the express declarations of Scripture.

### XVIII. *On the Priesthood of Christ.*

Christ, after his resurrection, ascended into heaven. After his ascent he received and bestowed the Holy Ghost. Pentecost. Christ officiates in heaven as the High Priest. His ascent into heaven essential to his Priesthood. The perpetuity of His Priesthood. The manner of his intercession. Christ the only Mediator between God and man. There can be only one Priest under the Christian dispensation, viz. Christ. The priesthood of the Papal Church, of Mormonism, &c., a piece of mockery, and, in some cases, of wickedness. The supposed origin of human priesthoods. The order of priests in the Church of England inconsistent. None but Christ can be considered a priest under the Christian dispensation.

### XIX. *Christ is King, as well as Priest.*

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### XX. *The Extent of the Atonement.*

The Extent of the Atonement has been strongly and ably contested by theologians. No passage in the Bible expressly states that Christ died to save a part of mankind only. This doctrine is not logically implied in any text of Scripture. Remarks on Mr. Roby's "Defence of Calvinism." An examination of Eph. i. 11, and Rom. viii. 29. Mr. Leask's notion respecting the

difference between atonement and redemption, examined ; if correct, it does not settle the controversy. Dr. J. Pye Smith's remarks respecting Armenians, incorrect. Calvin's remarks on 1 Tim. ii. 1-6, implies that God would have all men to be saved. The inconsistent method resorted to by restricted redemptionists to nullify the doctrine of universal redemption. Dr. Symington's new version of 1 Tim. ii. 1-6. The opinions of Mr. E. Coles and Mr. Hurriem on partial redemption. God, as an all-perfect Being, could not will the salvation of all men, if he had not provided for their salvation. The inconsistency of saying that " God has an open and declared will, and a secret will which is contrary to it." What is truth with man must be truth with God. The notion of divine duplicity is dishonourable to God, and distressing to man. We ought to believe God's declared will to be consistent with his secret will. Scripture plainly declares that Christ died for all men. Remarks by A. Barnes on Heb. ii. 9. The advocates of a limited redemption cannot use Scripture language to express their creed. The Editor of Blackie's Edition of " Barnes' Notes" explains away the evident meaning of God's Word. 1 John ii. 1, 2, considered, and other passages of a similar import. To say that the *whole world* means the *elect world*, is a theological figment. The Rev. R. Morrison on this subject. The 1st epistle of John is a " Catholic Epistle." The testimonies of Dionysius Alexandrinus, Scott, and Wesley. The idea which some people hold, that the phrase, " whole world," is used in Scripture, in a loose and indefinite sense, is unreasonable. A quotation from Matt. Henry.

### XXI. *Extent of the Atonement. — Objections answered.*

There are some texts of Scripture which seem to speak of Christ as having died for the elect only ; but such passages, when properly considered, are not at variance with the doctrine of Universal Redemption. A Quotation from Mr. Carpenter. The fact that all are not saved is no proof that Christ did not die for all. The death of Christ necessary if only one be saved. The sacrifice offered by Christ sufficient to atone for all. God, in the gift of his Son, had other objects in view than redeeming man. A quotation from Finney. All beings in heaven are benefitted by redemption. Redemption no failure, whoever be saved, or whoever be lost. Man's salvation conditional. God uses means for the salvation of sinners. Some of God's ways incomprehensible. The reason why God does many things which we cannot comprehend. " Did Christ die for those who were in hell before his death?"—answered. The idea of God's reprobating to damnation a portion of the human family, not scriptural. Dr. Payne and Finney on this subject. A stricture on Mr. Parke's peculiar notion. The notion that God has so circumstanced some that they cannot obtain salvation—answered. Young children ; idiots ; Heathens. The reasons why we should send heathens the gospel, even if they can be saved without it. Impenitents. The doctrine of universal redemption *not novel*. The Bible must be the standard. Quotations from

Bishop Davenant, Clemens Alexandrinus, Origen, Augustine, Primacius, Athanasius, Miller, &c., to prove that the doctrine of universal redemption was held in the primitive ages of Christianity. Cyril, Chrysostom, and Ambrose—Flodoardus and Gotteschalchus the monk—Luther and Calvin, believed in universal redemption; so did Bullinger, Benediot, Arctius, Wolfgang, Latimer, and Bishop Jewel. It is the doctrine of the Church of England. References to several learned commentators. A quotation from E. Polhill. Many eminent theologians in the present day advocate this doctrine. Preached successfully by the various Methodist bodies. The reason why some Calvinistic divines embrace the limitarian doctrine. A limited atonement inconsistent with the most glorious doctrines of the New Testament. The Calvinistic notion of the divine decrees is inconsistent with reason and Scripture, and irreconcilable with the justice of God. A quotation from the "Evangelical Rep." page 14.

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## I. INTRODUCTION.

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**What is meant by Theology. Various kinds of Theology. Definition of Religion. The mode in which Christian Theology will be discussed in the following dissertations. The Bible is the only infallible standard of faith. The Bible is a divine book. Human systems of Theology; their value. What we are to understand by divine inspiration. An examination of the various kinds of inspiration,—plenary,—verbal,—superintending, &c. Proofs of the divinity and infallibility of the Bible;—its preservation from destruction and corruption. No defects of material consequence in our authorised version. Testimony of Learned men. Various Versions of the Old and New Testament. Infidel arguments against the divinity of the Bible answered. Reference to Greece and Rome;—Africa;—the Indoes;—Tartars;—Japanese;—Chinese, &c.;—the Romish church in the dark ages. Idolatry in all nations, ancient and modern, barbarous or civilized, where the Word of God is not circulated. Duty of searching the Scriptures and being guided by their teaching. Nothing to be added to, or taken from the Bible.**

**THEOLOGY** is a compound of two Greek words, which in plain English, signifies a discourse on God, or a description of the Divine nature. Considered as a science it includes the doctrines which we are to believe, and the duties we are to practise in connection with a religious life. In order to distinguish the several branches of this sacred science, various descriptives are prefixed to the principal word, such as, natural, moral, scholastic, dogmatic, and speculative Theology.

Each of these descriptives have their definite and significant meaning. The following essays treat on those sub-



jects which are deemed essential to a proper knowledge of the christian religion, and a performance of those duties which God requires in order to man's salvation ; in other words, they are designed to set forth the fundamental principles of the christian religion, in relation to *faith* and *experience*, in such a manner as to be clearly understood. Religious duties and practical piety will, perhaps, form the matter of another volume.

It may be necessary to remark here, that the term *religion*, etymologically considered, is an ambiguous word and of somewhat dubious origin. According to Cicero, it is derived from the Latin word, "*religere*, which signifies *to consider*." The generality of modern grammarians derive it from the Latin word *religo*, which signifies "I bind anew, or I bind fast." If the Ciceronian etymology is correct, the word religion would seem to denote the diligent study of whatever pertains to the worship of God, according to the other derivation it denotes that obligation which we feel in our minds arising from the relation in which we stand to some superior power.

In our general conversation we use the word religion in a relative sense, i.e. in relation to some Creed or Sect. Hence we often qualify our meaning with a descriptive word or phrase, as, the *Jewish* religion, the *Mohammedan* religion, the *Christian* religion, the *Protestant* religion or the *Romish* religion. In a practical and conventional sense, it is generally considered synonymous with godliness, or a life devoted to the worship of God, or a practical performance of all known duties to God and our fellow men, in obedience to the divine command. Therefore, in order to attain to a correct knowledge of the christian

religion, we must first view the subject theologically. We must consider that there is one God, the Creator and Preserver of all things, the moral Governor of the universe, who is the rewarder of those who diligently seek him, and who taketh vengeance on those who rebel against him. For a better understanding of the nature and extent of our duties, together with the reasons of our obligations, and that our minds may be deeply impressed with our responsibility to God, as the author of our being, and the Supreme Judge of the universe, we must, in the next place, inform ourselves, as accurately as possible, what attributes and perfections belong to God, and by what works he has illustrated his infinite perfections. It is our duty to inquire further, what manner of beings we are ourselves; what capacities and inclinations we possess; what is our moral and spiritual condition; and in what peculiar relation we stand to God, and to that eternal state of existence for which we are destined. After which it will be necessary to inquire into the character of those laws and ordinances which God has commanded us to observe, as necessary to salvation. For, to be able to love and serve God acceptably, we should possess a comprehensive acquaintance with all the essential doctrines and precepts of the sacred Scriptures. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." And this divine knowledge of God, and his Son Jesus Christ, implies all that is comprehended in the Christian religion. Hence arises the great and important question:—Where is such knowledge to be obtained? The best and most rational answer we can give to this important question is:—"Search the Scriptures, for

in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Christ." In religious matters the Bible is the only infallible guide. Living instructors, and human systems of theology, may be serviceable in their places, in as much as they afford the diligent student of divinity many aids and facilities for acquiring correct information; but it should ever be borne in mind, that the highest human authority must, on subjects of religious controversy, bow to the law and testimony of Jehovah! No opinion, merely human, ought to be embraced or maintained, in opposition to the manifest meaning of the Word of God. The Bible is true, and every man who teaches doctrines contrary to the Bible is a liar, and the truth is not in him.—Rom. iii. 4.

In many colleges and theological institutions, the Bible, in reality, is not the creed-book and supreme standard of final appeal. The student is not left free to prosecute his sacred studies, and form his own religious notions and opinions, from the Word of God. His creed is formed for him, or perhaps it may be more proper to say, he chooses, blindly, to embrace the creed of the institution: and having placed himself under living instructors, he submits to their authoritative teaching, and forms his religious opinions according to their dogmatic instructions. However we may value theological colleges, and respect the learning and piety of men of superior intellectual attainments, we must bear in mind that the Bible is the only authority by which our religious opinions should be determined, because it is the infallible Word of God, given by Him for our instruction and salvation. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for cor-

rection, for instruction in righteousness." 2 Tim. iii. 16.  
"But holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Peter i. 21.

Having laid particular stress upon the infallibility of the Bible, it may be necessary here to offer a few remarks, and to adduce a few arguments in confirmation of its authenticity and divinity. When we assert that the Bible is a divine book, we mean, not only that its sacred pages treat on divine subjects, but that God himself is its author in a particular and singular sense: viz., by inspiring *holy men* to write it. But how, and in what sense, they were thus inspired, has been a disputed question among the learned. Very different views are entertained respecting the precise signification of the word *inspiration*, in its application to the subject under consideration. For example,

1. Some theologians who strenuously maintain a *plenary* inspiration, argue that not only the sentiments but also the words of the Bible were divinely inspired. In favour of which opinion, they refer to the following passages:—  
"And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say; for the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say." Luke xii. 11, 12. "Which things also we speak, not in the *words* which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." 1 Cor. ii. 13. "Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace *that should come* unto you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory

that should follow." 1 Peter i. 10, 11. They maintain that the ideas could not have been given without *words*; but this, we think, does not necessarily follow. God could, if he had thought proper, have communicated ideas to their minds in other ways than by verbal expression, which in fact, was the case, in various instances, when the inspired writers were instructed in visions, and by hieroglyphic representations; the Holy Spirit, at the same time, illuminating their minds, so as to enable them to understand the precise signification of the representations.

Besides, if the sacred penmen had been inspired with *words only*, it seems reasonable to suppose that the style of the Bible throughout would have been identical, allowing for the variety of subjects under consideration. But it is a fact worthy of attention, that every writer has a style peculiar to himself, which seems to be in character with his education, his calling in life, and the peculiar circumstances in which he was at the time placed: and even two inspired authors, relating the same event or narrative, though they agree substantially, nevertheless use different words to express their meaning. We have ample proof of this fact, not only in the historical writings of the Old Testament, but also in the sacred records of the four Evangelists. We admit, of course, that had God thought proper, he could have changed the style with the gift of inspiration to each individual; but it seems more reasonable to suppose, that, *in general*, the sacred penmen were left to select words to express the sentiments which they were divinely inspired to utter. In our judgment this notion seems to gain additional confirmation from the fact, that amongst mankind there are so many different languages, the cha-

racter and structure of which, in many respects, differ so widely, that a verbal translation would be impossible, or if such a translation could be accurately carried out, the sentiments would be obscured, and consequently the design of inspiration partially frustrated. If the human race, uniformly, at all times, and in all places, imbodyed their sentiments in the same language, and in the same words; or if all languages imbodyed corresponding words, and were of the same grammatical structure, a verbal inspiration might, with propriety, be strongly contended for, and supported on tenable grounds. But as this is not the case, and as the original cannot, in all languages, be translated, *word* for *word*, so as to make good and complete sense, and at the same time preserve the original meaning, we do not see sufficient reason to believe in a verbal inspiration only in those cases where this seems to be asserted.

2. There seems to be many things recorded in the Bible which did not require any supernatural assistance, only to influence and direct the mind of the writer, so as to secure infallible truth. The sacred penmen knew by ordinary means, and by the logical use of their intellectual faculties, that they were relating certain historical facts, with which they were personally acquainted, and which they knew to be correct: they were also able to make occasional reflections which were suggested by particular subjects and occurrences. In such cases no supernatural influence was necessary, but to preserve the mind from error. But whenever, and so far as, divine assistance was needed, it was invariably afforded. This is what divines sometimes call an inspiration of superintendency. We are not, however, to suppose that the writers of the Bible were left to

make their own selection of facts, but that they were urged by a divine impulse to write such particular events, and to set down such particular observations as Divine Wisdom saw necessary; otherwise they would have been in danger of producing inaccurate and unfair accounts, by confounding one thing with another. Besides, from so large a mass of materials, men of uncultivated minds, who were not in the habit of distinguishing and classifying, could not have made a proper selection, nor would persons unskilled in the art of composition have been able to express themselves in such terms as would secure a faithful representation of doctrines and facts with that dignity which the nature of the subjects require. A divine influence therefore must have been exerted on their minds, by which their memories and judgment were strengthened and enlightened. Hence the promised gift of the Holy Ghost was designed to bring to their remembrance all things whatsoever Christ had said to them. This proves that the Evangelists, in writing the Memoirs of Christ, were divinely assisted:—their mental powers were endowed by the Holy Ghost with extraordinary vigour and energy.

3. In many passages of Scripture there is found such elevation of thought, such purity and sublimity of style; and such profound and awful sentiments, as show most clearly that the powers of the writers were raised above their natural and ordinary capabilities. To illustrate this idea, we will suppose a case:—If a person of moderate talents, in the humble walks of life,—a labouring man or a common mechanic,—should give as elevated a description of the majesty and attributes of God, or reason as profoundly on the deep mysteries of a supernatural religion,

as a man of the most exalted genius and extensive acquirements, we should be convinced that he was supernaturally assisted. This conviction would be greatly strengthened if his composition should far transcend the highest efforts of the most accomplished human intellect. Now it is a truth, almost universally admitted, that some of the sacred writers, who were taken from the lowest ranks of life, have written the most sublime and dignified sentiments, and have described the attributes and perfections of the Great Eternal, in the most awful and majestic forms of speech. They have also represented and described the works and ways of God, in a manner so grand and glorious, that, contrasted therewith, the noblest flights of human genius, accompanied with the most splendid effusions of poetic fire, are comparatively cold and insipid. Even the most sublime and graphic sentiments in "Milton's Paradise Lost" are not equal in majesty, dignity, and purity to the inspired poetry which we find in many parts of the book of Job, and in the writings of Isaiah: in some of these passages, *words* as well as ideas were most likely inspired.

4. The ideas comprehended in many passages of Scripture must have been directly communicated to the writers by God himself. No created being, whether human or angelic, could have known them by any natural means. However skilled a man might have been in arts and sciences, he could not have attained such knowledge by a simple exercise or elevation of his intellectual faculties. For instance, no created intelligence could have discovered the purpose of the Divine Mind, as developed in the mediatorial scheme and the administration of His moral



government, and which will continue to be, to the consummation of time, and throughout a never-ending eternity; which subjects are partially unfolded in the sacred volume,—therefore, this kind of inspiration we attribute to those who were empowered to reveal heavenly mysteries, which were first made known to them by the Father of Lights, by an “*inspiration of revelation.*” St. Paul says he received the gospel by revelation, which was made known to him by the Spirit. In another place, when speaking of the “hidden mysteries” which God had prepared for them that love Him, he adds :—“But God hath revealed them to us by His Spirit.” 1 Cor. ii. 9. Hence the writers of the Sacred Scriptures were inspired in *various ways* and in different degrees, as the nature of the various subjects on which they wrote and spoke required, so as to make what they recorded or said perfect, complete, and infallible.

It will not be needful here to bring forward those arguments which are generally adduced in confirmation of the authenticity and divinity of the sacred writings. On these important subjects many able works have been written and published by eminent divines and learned theologians. And, indeed, the history of the Bible, from the giving of the law on Mount Sinai, to the closing of the Sacred Book by St. John, on the Isle of Patmos, carries with it indubitable evidence of its divine origin; amidst all the changes of time, the fluctuations of mortal affairs, and the rise and fall of kingdoms, God has miraculously preserved His own Word. It is a fact universally admitted by the learned, that the Bible (or a considerable portion of it at least) is a book of unrivalled antiquity. The Pentateuch, or five Books of Moses, was

written upwards of 3,300 years ago, by the Jewish law-giver : viz., nearly one thousand years before any other authentic history within our knowledge. The oldest profane historians on whom we can safely rely, are Herodotus and Thucydides, who flourished subsequently to the Babylonish captivity, and were contemporary with Ezra and Nehemiah, who were the last inspired historians of the Old Testament. It may be said that the productions of Homer, Hesiod, and a few others, are more ancient than the history of Herodotus ; but they were simply poetic and fabulous productions, and some of them of very questionable authenticity ; and even works of this description cannot be traced back, by historical testimony, further than the reign of Jehu and Ahab, or about 850 years before Christ. Now, from the days of Moses to the coming of Christ, the Jews, who had the care of the sacred writings, were many times partially dispersed, harassed with wars, and oppressed by the Midianites, the Philistines, the Syrians, the Egyptians, and the Chaldeans—(see Judges vi. 2, 6 ; 1 Sam. xiii. 20 ; 2 Kings xiii. 4, 7 ; 2 Chron. xii. 2, 9 ; 2 Kings xvii. 6, 18, 24 ; and Jer. lii.)—and, finally, after three years' dreadful campaigns—in which many of the princes and nobles lost their heads, and thousands of the commonalty were slain, the survivors were carried captives to Babylon ; their sacred temple was pillaged of its consecrated furniture, and then burnt to ashes ; the ark which contained the sacred manuscripts, &c., was destroyed, together with all the glory of Jewish worship—their city was laid waste, and continued in that state for more than one hundred years.”

Neh. ii. 17. "But even in this captivity we have traces of the preservation of the Scriptures."

We are informed that, when Antiochus Epiphanes took Jerusalem, "he murdered 40,000 of its inhabitants, sold as many more to be slaves, and ordered, that whosoever was found with the Book of the Law should be put to death ; and every copy of it that could be discovered was burnt. (Maccab. i. 56, 57.) Yet even during this fiery trial, which lasted three years, the Scriptures were preserved." And, notwithstanding the constant disposition of the Jews to idolatry previous to their captivity, which, humanly speaking, greatly endangered the safety of the sacred writings, God most wonderfully preserved them. When Josiah the King of Judah, and Hilkiah the high priest, were destitute of an authentic copy of the Scriptures, after making diligent search, they found one which God had taken care of, "in the house of the Lord." (See 2 Kings xxii. 8 ; 2 Chron. xxxiv. 14.)

The Bible has not only been preserved from destruction, but from such corruptions and alterations as would have invalidated its authenticity and divinity. Among the numerous ancient manuscripts and versions of the Divine Word, there is no substantial disagreement in reference to those matters which relate to man's salvation. On this important and vital subject, the good and learned Dr. A. Clarke says:—"Notwithstanding all the helps which the various manuscripts and ancient versions afford for the illustration of the sacred text, the reader must not imagine, that in those manuscripts and versions which do not contain the *whole* of the sacred text, there is any essential defect in matters that relate to the faith and practice, and

consequently to the salvation of the Christian. So has Divine Providence ordered it, that, although a number of mistakes have been committed by careless copyists, as well as by careless printers, not one *essential truth* of God has been *injured* or *suppressed*. In this respect, all is perfect; and the way of the Most High is made so plain, even in the poorest copies, that the wayfaring man, though a fool, utterly destitute of deep learning and critical abilities, need not err therein." Such is the statement of the learned Dr. Clarke, who, notwithstanding the sarcastic remarks made concerning his peculiar notions relative to the fall of man, and the doctrine of the Sonship of Christ, will ever be regarded, by men of sound judgment, as one of the most profound theologians and accomplished biblical scholars whom the world ever produced, either in ancient or modern times. I am aware this idea of Dr. Clarke's is derided by some who differ from him in their theological views and opinions; but his able productions are standing and imperishable monuments, both of his great ability, and unwearied perseverance and industry.

Mr. B. E. Nichols, M.A., in his "Helps to reading the Bible," makes the following remarks on the subject now under consideration:—"The following facts are to be borne in mind:—

"1. A copy of the five books of Moses, called the Pentateuch, was made by the Samaritans, who, after the Babylonish Captivity, (more than 500 years before Christ), became the rooted enemies of the Jews, so that any agreement between the two copies cannot be considered as the work of design. See Ezra iv. 1—5; John iv. 9, and viii. 48, &c.

"2. Nearly 300 years before Christ, a translation of the

Old Testament into Greek, the language then most generally understood, was begun by order of Ptolemy Philadelphus, King of Egypt, and in subsequent reigns was completed and widely circulated.

“3. On comparing this Hebrew-Samaritan Pentateuch, and this Greek translation called the Septuagint, we find them substantially to agree with each other *and with our Bible.*”

In reference to the New Testament, and in confirmation of its preservation from corruption and alteration, it may be remarked, that it is a book more circulated, and more extensively quoted, than any other book in the world; and we are informed by men of competent judgment that, “from the very time it was written to the present day, the various quotations agree with our own Scriptures.” If this is correct, it speaks strongly in favour of the purity of our version. It may be proper just to notice further, that there are now extant several very ancient manuscripts of the New Testament, which, though made in different countries, and at different periods, perfectly agree in all essential truths, and in other matters differ but very little. In the British Museum there are two manuscripts, viz. the *Alexandrian* and the *Vatican*, which contain nearly the whole of the Old and New Testaments. They are in the Greek language, and it is supposed were written in the 4th or 5th century. We may properly conclude this subject in the language of Bishop Jewell:—“Cities fall, kingdoms come to nothing, empires fade away as the smoke. Where is Numa, Minos, Lycurgus? Where are their books? What has become of their laws? They are passed away. But no tyrant has been able to consume the Bible; no tradition to choke it, no heretic maliciously to corrupt it.

It stands untarnished unto this day, amid the wreck of all that is human, without the alteration of one sentence so as to change the doctrine taught therein." Even in the English Douay Bible and the Rhenish Testament, God has preserved all the essential doctrines of saving truth, and the Papal glossaries are easily distinguished from the pure Word of God. "There is no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel against the Lord." Prov. xxi. 30. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my Word shall not pass away," saith the Lord. "The Word of the Lord shall stand for ever." (Matt. xxiv. 55; Isa. xl. 8.) I shall not trouble the reader with such additional arguments as are generally brought forward in proof of the Divine inspiration of the Bible, but pass on to notice its

*Essential Necessity.* What is man, however learned, however exalted in rank and station, without the Bible, even in the most refined state of civilization and moral elevation to which art and science can raise him? He is, without the Word of God, dark and uninformed respecting God, heaven, and eternal things. Infidels in the present day, who have either directly or indirectly reaped the advantages of Gospel light, and the benefits resulting from the Bible, may boast of their superior intelligence, parade the march of mind and the glorious light of modern science, and ostentatiously come to a conclusion that they could do without the Bible; but the history of mankind proves that man, unenlightened by divine revelation, whether in refined Athens or in barbarous Carthage, is in darkness and under the influence of awful cruelty. In the former city, Jehovah was, to its learned inhabitants, an unknown God: in the latter, the best families sacrificed their

children to Saturn. And even in renowned Rome, the murder of infants was regulated by the law of Romulus ; and we are informed that this unnatural and inhuman practice was approved of, even by such men as Plutarch and Seneca. Hence civilization, in the absence of the Bible, has no effectual check to idolatry. St. Paul says, "The world by wisdom knew not God." 1 Cor. i. 21.

But it may be objected by modern infidels, that these nations were in comparative infancy ; that recent discoveries have thrown a flood of light on the human mind ; and that man is now able, independently of the Bible, to discover his true position in the universe, and to discharge his duties accordingly, agreeably with the laws of creation and the will of Jehovah. However plausible these notions may appear, and however gratifying to human vanity, historical facts prove their fallacy. We are not aware that history furnishes us with one single instance of any people or nation, turning from either Atheism or Idolatry to the knowledge and adoration of the only true God, without the guiding hand of Divine revelation. Look at the present state of the various African tribes, the Tartars, the Hindoos, the Japanese, and the ingenious Chinese. Certainly they have had time enough to find the true and right idea of God, and yet after 4000 years' improvement, and the full exercise of reason, they have to this day advanced no further in their progress towards true religion, than the adoration of stocks, stones, creeping things, and demons. They are like the learned Corinthians, who, 2000 years ago, "sacrificed unto devils and not unto God." 1 Cor. x. 20.

Bishop Heber, in his second vol. of Journals, page 354,

gives a most affecting account of the character of the Hindoos' religion as a great stimulant to crime. In fact all nations which have not been, directly or indirectly, instructed and benefitted by the Bible, are idolatrous, and in proportion as the circulation of the Scriptures is checked, men have shewn a tendency to relapse into idolatry. This fact appears very evident from the history of the Romish church. During the ninth and two following centuries,—frequently called the dark ages,—the Bible was scarcely known, either in this or in the surrounding countries. What was the consequence? The people were brutish and foolish. Every measure calculated to facilitate the progress of arts and sciences was suppressed, popular literature was unknown, and religious ignorance and superstition everywhere abounded. Hence mankind, without the Bible, are enveloped in moral darkness—no matter in what country they may reside, or in what age they may live, or what be their advantages in regard to civilization and political privileges. Therefore, the Eternal Jehovah, in His infinite goodness to lost, bewildered man, has lighted up the Lamp of divine revelation to teach him the knowledge both of Himself and of his own character and condition,—to show him what He is and what we are,—and to make us, through Christ, wise unto salvation. This is the great design, both of the Old and New Testaments. They are they which testify of God; which show us what is good, and what the Lord requires at our hands; which set before us the way of life and the way of death; and which teach us what we must do to be saved from the wrath to come, and to inherit eternal life.

It is not in the power of man, independently of revela-



tion, to direct his thoughts and steps aright, though we can, in the exercise of our own natural, unassisted powers, do many things contained in the moral law of God; and, though we can, in many cases, even of ourselves, judge what is right, our consciences bearing witness to what is good or evil, either by excusing or accusing us accordingly, yet we are not a sufficient law unto ourselves. Though the law is written on our hearts and consciences, we can never come to a full and clear knowledge of "that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God," which is to direct us in this life, without His Word. But in the sacred volume, the will of God is clearly revealed; and it fully instructs us in all things which belong to our peace in this life, and our eternal salvation in that life which is to come.

And if a man sin—"for in many things we all offend"—there is no other way of our being assured that we shall not perish, but by the Holy Scriptures. By them we are informed that we have an Advocate with the Father, "Jesus Christ the righteous," who "was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him;" "He bore our sins in his own body on the tree;" "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." Seeing that the great truths of the Christian religion are revealed to us in God's most Holy Word, we should search the Scriptures diligently and prayerfully, "and receive with meekness," and all readiness of mind, "the engrafted word, which is able to save our souls." We ought to believe all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets, and to give the more earnest heed to the doctrines and precepts which are taught by Christ and his apostles, that we may

hold fast the form of sound words, and the faith which was once delivered to the saints. That we may not err concerning the faith, let us take care that we be not led away from the truth, by human creeds and the high pretensions of men, who are curious about "times and seasons," or what they term "the signs of the times." Many of these characters turn prophets; professing to be wise upon what is written, they pry into hidden mysteries, which we have no need to know; they have become curious and adventurous in their calculations and conclusions. From such, and such like, "*foolish* and UNLEARNED questions, profane and vain babblings, and opposition of sciences, falsely so called, let us turn aside." "Let us give no heed to fables,—the commandments of men, and strife about words to no profit," nor suffer ourselves to be misled by new-fangled "philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." (1 Tim. vi. 20; Col. ii. 8.) It was never more necessary to inculcate these apostolic cautions than it is at the present day. New theories, startling for their novelty, and dangerous in their tendency, under some plausible pretext or another, are constantly in process of development. All that is needful for us to know, concerning our common salvation, is plainly taught in the Bible; I mean in the English Bible, in our own plain authorized version, so that he who runs may read. "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." 2 Cor. iv. 4.

The Scriptures, then, being plain and easy, so far as is necessary to make us wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, we ought to read them seriously, with believing hearts, not corrupting or altering anything which God hath said, or in any way perverting the meaning of Scripture so as to harmonize with our own beloved sentiments or private opinions. For thus saith the Lord, by the mouth of Moses, unto the children of Israel: "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it." Deut. iv. 2. And St. John concludes the sacred volume by saying: "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life." Rev. xxii. 18, 19. It appears, therefore, sufficiently evident, that the Bible is our sure, infallible guide in all matters pertaining to the religion of Christianity. We shall therefore proceed to inquire what particular truth the Bible teaches respecting God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the adorable Trinity. Also what it says respecting man, relatively to his origin, his primeval state, his apostacy, his restoration and eternal salvation, together with many different points of doctrine associated therewith.

## II. ON THE ETERNAL EXISTENCE AND ESSENCE OF DEITY.

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The eternal existence of God implied in the first assertion of the Bible. Only one God, but the original word denotes a plurality. Trinity in unity. What is meant by the word *person*. The eternity of the Divine existence incomprehensible. God is infinite. The study of natural philosophy of importance. The Bible is a comment on nature. The significant names of the Supreme Being. God is a Spirit—a pure infinite Spirit—a Being of indescribable majesty and glory. God is invisible: several passages on this subject examined. God is an *eternal Spirit*. None but God is eternal. Matter is not eternal.

It is a fact worthy of particular notice, that revelation opens with an assertion which implies the eternal existence of the *one* and only true God: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth;” and that, before the work of creation, nothing existed but Himself in any part of the universe, which is evident from what Moses says in the 20th chapter of Exodus: “For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is.” That the self-existent Creator, and first cause of all things, is *one* and *only one*, is a truth of infinite importance, and, when fully believed, frees the mind at once from those confused and perplexing notions involved in the doctrine of Polytheism, so prevalent in almost all heathen countries, both in ancient and modern times. I am aware that the opponents of Trinitarianism say, that those who believe in

the supreme divinity of the Saviour, and in the personality of the Holy Ghost, must necessarily believe in a plurality of Gods; and, consequently, they condemn the *Trinitarian* doctrine, in reference to the Godhead, as being irrational and anti-scriptural. This, however, is a false notion, founded in either malice or error, or, perhaps, an admixture of both. For, although we believe in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and that each of these persons is God, not *independently* and *distinctly*, but in union with His compeers, the undivided and inseparable Trinity, "One God in persons three," is the eternal Jehovah, the only true God. "The Lord our God is one Lord." That is to say, there is only one Divine Nature—one infinite Eternal Mind—one infinitely holy, invisible, uncreated and eternal Essence, whose being and nature are incomprehensible—"one true God."

Therefore, those who say that we set before us three distinct objects of supreme adoration—three infinite persons who have equal claims on our hearts—three divine objects whom we acknowledge as three Gods—bear false witness against us. They say what is not true. If we worship and adore Christ, it is because we believe that in Him "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;" because we believe that He is "one with the Father," as touching His divinity—of the same mind and essence. And we believe the same in reference to the Eternal Spirit, or the Holy Ghost. On this subject the learned Dr. Clarke says:—"The original word *Elohim*, God, is certainly the plural form of *El*, or *Eloah*, and has long been supposed, by most eminently learned and pious men, to imply a *plurality* of persons in the divine nature. As this plurality

appears in so many parts of the sacred writings to be confined to *three* persons, hence the doctrine of the Trinity."

It is evident to every careful and intelligent reader of polemic theology, that many who have disputed on this controverted point, have taken widely different views of the *meaning* of the word *person*, and consequently come to different conclusions in reference to the divine character of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, who, we believe, constitute "Trinity in unity." In common language *person* signifies not only a distinct but a *separate* individual substance of a rational or intelligent nature. In a strict philosophical sense, Watson says: "it signifies simply a distinct being, and if the term *persons* were so applied to the Trinity in the Godhead, a plurality of Gods would necessarily follow." It may therefore be proper to remark, that we use the word *person*, when applied to the Trinity, not in its ordinary sense, but in a sense peculiarly modified, not to express the existence of an absolutely *separate, independent*, intelligent nature, but to mark the fact of a real distinction in the Godhead, or that the "only true God," who is "one Lord," and one divine nature, exists in eternal unity, under the personal distinctions, as *now* revealed to us, of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. As it would be out of place here to enter into any elaborate discussion on this mysterious subject, without making any further remarks at present, we shall proceed to consider, according to our ability, the essence, nature, and attributes of the Divine Being. This is confessedly a great and an awful subject, and consequently ought to be approached with deep humility and profound veneration. When we attempt to describe, or accurately define the properties of the divine

nature, or the essence and existence of the Great Eternal, "who dwelleth in light which no man can approach unto," we ought to proceed with fear and trembling, and with a strict regard to revealed truth, lest we presumptuously fall into error, out of which we cannot extricate ourselves. No created mind, however intelligent and capacious, can fully comprehend the essence and eternal glory of the Divine Mind. But this should not deter us from obtaining as clear and as comprehensive views of the subject as we possibly can. The mind of a truly enlightened man may understand something of the properties, powers, and effects of the Divine attributes; but of the *pure essence* of uncreated existence,—the basis of God's infinite perfections,—the particular nature of his spirituality,—of what he is in himself, or what is the *substratum* in which all his glorious perfections inhere, and from which his attributes, natural and moral, take their rise, no mind inferior to His own is capable of forming any adequate conception. And this truth, when philosophically considered, is consistent with both reason and revelation. All created minds must be dependent on the Creator, and are consequently finite; and that which is finite cannot by any possible means comprehend that which is infinite. The only method we have of conceiving great and exalted notions of the Deity, is by forming ideas of his excellency and perfection, arising from the contemplation of such displays of his glory and greatness as are unfolded to us in his works, and in the volume of Divine revelation. But all such thoughts and ideas, however exalted and sublime, must be vastly defective in conveying to our minds clear and comprehensive conceptions of the transcendent purity and glory of the Divine nature. On this grand and

profound subject an eminently learned and pious theologian remarks:—"No human mind, nor created intelligence can comprehend God; no vision, no hearing, no touch, no sensible evidence, no mode of experimenting, can bring man into communion with the *Infinite One*. All that we can know of this unfathomable and awful mystery may be compared to the image formed by a few refracted rays from the infinite brightness, beautiful indeed and glorious, and to us infinitely beneficial, but, after all, how small and inconsiderable when compared with the unutterable Majesty! This self-evident and most important fact should have a never-ceasing influence upon our minds, in all our theological investigations. It is the veil before the sanctuary, to prevent unhallowed and fruitless attempts at intrusion. That which is infinitely above our reach, it is folly to grasp at. But it is true wisdom to acknowledge our limited powers both of investigation and apprehension, to apply them to such objects as are suitable to them, to receive what God has revealed, and affectionately to acquiesce in not knowing what he has seen fit to withhold. If it were possible for us to have our mental views of Deity intuitively, or in any way than by analogy and contemplative elevation, the result would be overwhelming and consuming to our feelings; and compliance with the Divine Will would be rather the result of irresistible coercion than of moral motives."

Natural philosophy, or an accurate knowledge of the elements and laws of nature, and of the constitution of the material universe, most certainly furnishes us with indubitable evidence of a Supreme and Almighty Power, before which the race of mortals ought to worship and adore—of



the existence of an infinitely wise and benevolent Being who made and governs the vast empire of universal dominion, agreeably with those fundamental laws of nature which he has ordained and established. But this philosophic idea of the Most High, considered apart from inspired theology, is totally inadequate to furnish us with that clear and comprehensive knowledge of his nature which is essential to our satisfaction and happiness. "The world by wisdom knew not God." The learned sages of antiquity, in their profound researches after "the Great First Cause," after unravelling many mysteries in nature, were confounded when they attempted to comprehend the Divine essence; and the most learned and illustrious of them was honest enough to acknowledge the insufficiency of human reason to comprehend the nature of God; and confessed that the more he thought on the subject, the more he felt his incapacity for the task. Hence it is in the sacred volume we must look for those illustrious displays, and lucid developments of the Divine nature and character, which will lead us to form the most correct notions possible of his essence, glory, and dignity.

In many instances the Bible is a comment on nature. Nature is the grand source and means by which inspired and revealed truth is illustrated. The sacred penmen select various objects in nature to exhibit and unfold their inspired sentiments. While they draw from the rich stores of nature, they at the same time pour forth oceans of light over the vast regions of the natural system, showing at once, by the irresistible force of divine light and inspired eloquence, that nature and revelation conspire to reveal, and most majestically to display, the infinite

perfections of the same adorable and incomprehensible but invisible Deity. "The heavens declare the glory of God : and the firmament sheweth his handywork." Perhaps the most correct knowledge to which we can attain, in reference to what God is, of and in himself, is implied in his name. It is a name of perculiar import and signifi-  
cancy, and which none but the great Eternal has ever ventured to assume. He claims it for himself as his pecu-  
liar glory. "I am Jehovah, that is my name, and my glory I will not give to another." The word *Jehovah* means the *existent* One, or He that is, and so we have it explained to Moses: "I am that I am," or according to the *Septuagint*, "I am He who exists." The Arabic paraphrase imports the same idea, "The Eternal who passes not away;" i.e., I exist, and have my being in and of myself, without depen-  
dence upon any other cause; and my existence is always the same, unchangeable and eternal. The Psalmist says: "From everlasting to everlasting thou art God." "Thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end." And to St. John God said: "I am Alpha and Omega, which is, and which was, and which is to come: the Almighty." As though he had said, I am the perpetual, unchangeable, and eternal Being. St. John, when describing the praises of the holy angels, says: "They rest not day nor night, saying 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come ;' and when they had given glory and honour and thanks unto him that sitteth upon the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, they cast their crowns before the throne, "Saying, thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

In confirmation of what has been said respecting the import of the word *Jehovah*, we may add the remarks of an eminent theological critic: "Jehovah Elohim,—the Lord God. This form of expressing his name is used about one hundred times in the Old Testament, which in the New Testament is explained by the terms, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The word Jehovah implies unity, and Elohim a plurality in that unity." Another learned author says: "Jehovah is a compound formed from the present, past, and future tense of the Hebrew verb for existence, thus beautifully expressed by St. John: 'Grace be unto you, and peace, from him who is, and who was, and who is to come.'"

But what God is in his nature and essence, is perhaps more clearly and significantly expressed by the Saviour himself, in his conversation with the woman of Samaria. He said unto her: "God is a Spirit." This is not merely a declaration of the unity and existence of God, as some have ventured to affirm, but a plain and definite assertion of what God is, in reference to his nature. He is "a Spirit." What is the peculiar nature of that divine and spiritual substance which constitutes Deity we cannot fully understand; but our Saviour's declaration evidently implies that God is not a corporeal, but a spiritual Being. There are, nevertheless, some men, and men of profound learning and accredited piety too, who will not admit that this passage means that *God is a pure Spirit*. But to suppose that God is composed of bodily parts, or that he is a compound of matter and mind, is a notion obviously at variance with the inspired oracles. According to our notions of matter, it cannot have existed from eternity; neither can it exist in every place at one and the same moment of time; neither

can it possess in itself knowledge: it must, therefore, be admitted that when the Scriptures speak of the eyes, face, arms, &c., of God, such phrases must be regarded as metaphorical expressions used by the sacred writers in condescension to the weakness of the human capacity, that we may the better understand things spiritual by comparing them with things which come directly under the apprehension of our corporeal senses. God, strictly speaking, is an immaterial, incorruptible substance,—an immense, self-existent, and self-acting mind,—and is infinitely above the perception of our bodily senses, or intellectual capabilities,—free from the imperfections of matter, and the infirmities of corporeal beings, and far more excellent than finite creatures can possibly be. He is the Father of Spirits, and of all created intelligences. As a pure, infinite Spirit, he has no shape, form, or dimensions, and is invisible to mortal eyes,—a *spiritual Substance*, really existing in inconceivable greatness and glory, although imperceptible to the organs of sense. “No man hath seen God at any time.” He dwelleth in light unapproachable,—in the light of his own uncreated glory; and were he to unveil the full splendour of his Godhead, our mortal vision would be instantly “blinded with excessive light.” No man could see God and live. One of the heathen poets, in describing the glory of their supreme god, says: “He dwelleth in the refulgent blaze of Olympiad;” but the God of the Bible, the God of the universe, dwells in the uncreated and unrevealed glory of *Himself*.

It must have struck the attention of every attentive Bible reader, that there are several passages of Scripture which speak of God as having been seen, and the sceptical

critic, comparing these passages with those that speak of the invisibility of Deity, has arrogantly concluded, and impiously asserted, that these various passages contradict each other. But a careful examination of those portions of Scripture which speak of God as appearing visibly to human beings, and a legitimate method of explaining them, will convince us that they do not in the least contradict the affirmations which are elsewhere made respecting the invisibility of God. Let us turn our attention to two or three of the passages in question. In Exodus, chap. xxiv., we read that: "Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, together with seventy of the elders of Israel, saw the Lord God of Israel in Horeb, and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in its clearness; and the nobles of Israel *saw God* and did eat and drink." But it is evident from what Moses subsequently stated, that this was only in appearance, i.e., unconnected with any personal similitude; for in the fourth chapter of Deuteronomy, where Moses is warning the people against idolatry, he expressly asserts: "Ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb, out of the midst of the fire." In the sixth chapter of Isaiah, the prophet says: "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim; each had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, 'Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.'" And St. John says: "I looked, and behold, a door was open in heaven: \* \* \* \* and a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

And he was to look upon like jasper and a sardine stone. and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald." Rev. iv. 1—3. But none of these passages point out any similitude, shape, or dimensions. They are rather descriptions of the surrounding refulgent glory. In each of these manifestations the invisible Deity has given the fullest proof of his being, but he has not appeared in the likeness of anything in heaven, or earth, or sea.

God is an *Eternal Spirit*. "From everlasting to everlasting thou art God," says the Psalmist. As to the mode of the Divine existence prior to creation, it is a subject too profound and mysterious for any created mind to understand. The idea of God's existing alone from eternity, in himself and of himself, up to the time he commanded some living Spirit or inanimate substance to exist, is an awful mystery, and involves many peculiar considerations calculated to overwhelm our minds. Yet it is a truth we are bound to believe. And a firm belief in the eternity of God's existence, and that no being in the universe, material or immaterial, is co-existent with him, lies at the foundation of all sound and rational theology: for if we admit of any spirit, or any material form or substance existing independently from eternity, beside God, such self-existent being would obstruct or interfere with his universal sovereignty, and his moral government of the universe. For a being who can exist of itself must be Almighty; but there cannot be two Almighties, and consequently there cannot be two Eternals. There was therefore a time, if it be proper to call it time, when Jehovah existed alone. Agreeably with this opinion, the

great Rabbi Eliezer says, "Before the Almighty created the world, He and *His name existed alone*." Manassah Ben Israel, in his work on creation, shows that this opinion was received and approved of by all the wise men of ancient times. We gain nothing to relieve our minds by throwing back the date of creation, or supposing that other worlds and systems existed previously to the now existing material universe. For, whether we suppose the oldest creature in existence to have been created six thousand or six thousand millions of years ago, or even to have existed as many ages as there are drops of water in the ocean and sands on its numerous shores, it does not in the least alter the axiomatical truth—God, as the one Eternal Being, once existed alone. He is therefore to be regarded as the sole Creator of all things, corporeal and spiritual, visible and invisible. The admission of a contrary notion would lead to endless inconsistencies and uncertainties. If matter existed from eternity, and existed of itself, as some Atheistical philosophers have impiously and *foolishly* asserted, it is indebted to God for nothing it possesses, and we might properly ask, what right had God to it? or what title had he to fashion it according to his pleasure? And as Basil observes:—"If it was, in reality, uncreated, it must be esteemed worthy of the same honours with God," and further, we should be at a loss to conceive how the Great Architect of the universe came into possession of that which might be considered, not only equal, but in some respects superior to himself. It was at least a thing of which he stood in need, and which supplied him with materials and facilities for his operations, and thus was greater than himself, while this supposed eternal and self-existent matter stood

in no need of him, or at least received nothing from him. Hence, if this hypothesis were correct, as Vogelsangius says, "matter must have conferred a truly signal favour upon God, in furnishing him with means by which he might, to this day, be known and acknowledged as Omnipotent." It will, therefore, be seen, that God is the only Being in the universe who has existed from all eternity. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," &c. Before proceeding to illustrate the natural attributes and moral perfections of the Deity, it seems necessary to shew, that He is the Creator of all things, and that He rules them by His sovereign authority, and preserves them by His providence. These facts will furnish us with arguments by which to illustrate such attributes and perfections.



### III. ON CREATION.

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Nothing eternal but God. God is the Creator of all things in the universe, whether material or intellectual. The manner in which God brought the material universe into existence. Creation, a grand and sublime subject. The vastness of creation in relation to both matter and mind. All creation dependent on God. The creation and formation of our globe considered. The date of creation, according to the Hebrew Bible, the Septuagint, Usher, Josephus, Dr. Wills, and Mr. Whiston. The discoveries of modern geology, considered in reference to the age of our world. Various theories investigated and considered. Weighty objections to the present popular theory, when considered in connection with the Mosaic account of creation. Quotation from Macgillivray. Dr. Baylee's hypothesis considered. Quotation from Dr. J. Pye Smith. Remarks on the article written by S. H. Boyd, Esq. The manner of accounting for the now-existing phenomena in the geological strata. The deluge, and its probable effects on our globe. The Word of God our safest guide. Summing up of the opinions of many learned men—Hitchcock, Dr. A. Clarke, Professor Ray, Dr. Woodward, Couvler, and others.

WE have endeavoured to prove in the preceding essay that, before creation, nothing existed except God; that there was no such world as this we now behold, which some have foolishly supposed to have been co-eternal with God; and that there was not any shapeless chaotic matter from which, by means of motion and chemical affinity, other substances were formed by some imaginary mind, which reduced them to certain forms and order, subjecting them to certain laws, and arranging them according to the now settled state of nature. Such ideas are chimerical, and the mind which gave birth to them was false and Atheistical.

For, if there were an *eternal nature* beside an *eternal God*, as Dr. Clarke observes, “there must have been two self-existing, independent, and eternal beings, which is a most palpable contradiction.” The Divine Being—satisfied in himself, *i.e.* with his own infinite perfections, and with the fulness and glory of his own eternal nature—was consummately and unchangeably happy from everlasting; and this happiness still forms one of the grand characteristics of his moral nature. He is infinitely, consummately, and eternally blessed in *Himself*. He, therefore, needs no external works, apart from himself, to complete his happiness; and it is necessary that this idea of the eternal perfection of Deity should be as fully believed as it is explicitly taught in the revelation of his Word. But, as Witsius very properly remarks, “It pleased him, however, to display his attributes in certain works that are without himself, (or in a certain sense apart from himself), the form and image of which he had most wisely delineated in his mind from eternity.” And since he needs no assistance from any—as nothing existed, or ever can exist, independently of him—he commanded the substance of all things that are to rise out of nothing. This was the act of his almighty and sovereign will. He created all things according to his good pleasure. The stupendous work which we call creation, or the material universe, was brought into existence without any laborious effort. “He spake and it was done.” “The creation of the world,” says St. Clement, “is the effect of his *counsel alone* ;” and this idea is explicitly expressed in several passages of Scripture, a few of which it may be proper here to mention.

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the

earth." Gen. i. 1. "In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is." Exodus xx. 11. "The Levites, Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabiah, Sherebiah, Hodijah, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah, said, Stand up and bless the Lord your God for ever and ever; and blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise. Thou, *even* thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshipeth thee." Nehemiah ix. 5, 6. "By the word of the Lord," says the Psalmist, "were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth." "The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine: *as for* the world and the fulness thereof, thou hast formed them." "I form the light, and create darkness." "The day is thine, the night also is thine: thou hast prepared the light and the sun." And "By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens." Psalms xxxiii. 6; lxxxix. 11; Isaiah xlv. 7; Psalms lxxiv. 16; Job xxvi. 13. The same sentiments are sublimely expressed in numerous passages by the prophets. "For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else." Isa. xlv. 18. "Ah Lord God, behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, *and* there is nothing too hard for thee." Jer. xxxii. 17. In a manner equally emphatic, the same great and glorious truth is expressed in the New Testament. The Apostle John, in

affirming the supreme divinity of the Saviour, says, "And the Word was God. All things were made by him ; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life ; and the life was the light of men." John i. 1,3,4. St. Paul, referring to the Godhead of the Redeemer, whom he designates, "The image of the *invisible* God," says, "By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers : all things were created by him, and for him." Col. i. 16. In the Epistle to the Hebrews the same Apostle says, "Every house is builded by some *man* ; but he that built all things is God." Heb. iii. 4. How magnificently sublime is the work of creation, when considered in a scriptural light ; especially when we take into consideration the immense quantity of matter which was brought into existence, out of which were formed the various suns, worlds, and systems which compose the boundless empire of the material creation. How far the regions of space extend, and how the vast expanse is filled and peopled, no human being, in the present life, can determine. How the planetary worlds, the sun in our own system, and the countless millions of fixed stars, which are considered to be suns, in the centre of other systems, are occupied, we know not. Our most eminent astronomers, with the aid of the most powerful optical instruments, cannot ascertain, with anything approaching to probable evidence, even the bounds of our solar system, or the number of worlds and satellites which are constantly revolving round the great orb of day. Nay, we are even ignorant of how great a diversity of forms, and what an infinite number of animated beings

may inhabit our own comparatively little terraqueous globe, so contracted is our knowledge of creation.

But, notwithstanding our limited attainments on this subject, we may, by certain calculations, form some rude, indefinite notions, of the vastness of its extent, and of the amazing quantity of matter lying within the range of human investigation. For instance, when we read the works of Dr. T. Dick on this subject, who leads us from planet to planet, and from system to system, measuring and calculating as he proceeds on his journey through the sidereal regions, and the vast fields of illimitable space, even up to "the heaven of heavens," and the august throne of Jehovah—

"Where angels tremble while they gaze"—

we cannot but feel our minds deeply impressed with the stupendous greatness and glory of creation. Though many of his awful sallies and bold flights of fancy may be incorrect, he certainly unfolds the works of God, as manifested in creation, and in the arrangement of the sidereal heavens, in a most sublime and interesting manner. Were we to be carried to some point in creation, where the whole universe might be presented to our view at once, and, at the same time, be endowed with power of vision, so that we could see at one glance the universal empire of nature; or were the different systems, with their burning suns, and millions of worlds, some of which are a thousand times larger than our earth, with all their grand and complicated appendages, to pass in a kind of moving panoramic view before us; what would be our sentiments and feelings, in reference to the power and glory of the Most High, when we reflected that he created and made them by "the word of

his power;" that he gave them existence, consolidation, form, and motion, fixed their boundaries, and established the laws by which they continue to exist and operate in everlasting harmony. But could we see all this, and have power to understand and fully to comprehend its greatness and glory, we should even then only behold the inferior parts of creation.

For, in viewing the manners and economy of the lower order of animals, we must admit that they possess something more than various modifications of matter and motion. They possess sense, instinct, and a portion of knowledge, which indicate and characterise a nature superior to *mere* matter. And in reference to ourselves, we feel most assuredly that we are animated with higher and nobler powers than those which characterise the various orders of *mere brute* animals. Man has a nature which is spiritual, intelligent, and animated. Nor is it groundless or extravagant to suppose that the planetary bodies, which, on a close and minute investigation, seem to be in circumstances nearly analogous to those of our earth, are the habitations of rational and intelligent beings. Nor is it impossible that some of those intelligences may be vastly superior to the human race. And the heavenly hosts, the morning stars that sang together, and the sons of God who shouted for joy, when the Almighty brought into existence the material universe, are all the creatures of God. He is "The Father of Spirits and of Angels." God created the whole universe of mind, as well as that of matter, and arranged the different gradations and orders of intellectual beings according to his own wisdom, from the lowest of our race, or of any beings in the universe possessed of mind,

to the highest ranks in the highest heavens. Hence he is the *sole* and *absolute* proprietor of all things, whether material or intellectual ; and they are all dependent on him for a continuation of their being. Amidst all the changes and transformations of the mineral and vegetable matter found in creation, and the ever-shifting phenomena occasioned by the dissolving and combinations of the various chemical elements and substances, which are incessantly changing the form and quality of the matter around us, God preserves in order the universal system of material nature, and, at the same moment of time, upholds and invigorates every mind. "By him all things consist; and he upholds them by the word of his power." "The Lord hath established the heavens and the earth, and they abide." "He hath compassed the waters with bounds, until the day and night come to an end; he bindeth the floods from overflowing;" and because he said it, while the earth remaineth, there shall be "seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night," so long as the world endureth.

Having made these general remarks respecting the creation and preservation of the universe, let us, in the next place, turn our particular attention to the *creation* and *formation* of our world,—the globe on which we live. We know that we live and move on the surface of a material world, and we can form some idea of its form, dimensions, solidity, and specific gravity. A few individuals, and only a few, have insanely professed to believe that the world is merely ideal, and totally devoid of any real substance or form. Such visionary ravings must either be the result of a disordered brain, or the monstrous offspring of the most

extravagant eccentricity. The world is before us; its actual existence is ocularly demonstrated; it is visible and tangible, and no process, kind, or method of reasoning, can demonstrate its mere ideal existence. Its "eternal hills and everlasting mountains;" its sterile rocks and verdant plains; its waving forests and sandy deserts; its flowing rivers and mighty seas, are ever before our eyes. The reality of the world's existence, therefore, cannot reasonably be disputed. In reference to the length of time it has been in existence, and how it was originally formed, many curious, conflicting, and fanciful opinions have been entertained by learned men. But, after all, we are indebted to the Bible for the most correct information. It may be proper, however, to remark that the sacred writings are not clear, and free from all ambiguity on this subject. We are informed by skilful linguists and learned professors, that "different copies give different dates." "The Hebrew copy of the Bible, which we Christians, for good reasons, consider as the most authentic, dates the creation of the world 3944 years before the Christian era. The Samaritan Bible fixes the commencement of the era of the creation 4305 years before the birth of Christ. The Greek translation, known by the name of the Septuagint version of the Bible, gives 5270 as the number of years which intervened between these two periods." Consequently it will be seen that the Septuagint carries us back 965 years beyond the Samaritan, and 1326 beyond the date fixed by the Hebrew version.

Several ingenious schemes have been formed by chronologists to prove that all the above dates are erroneous; but their calculations and conclusions, though plausible,



are not supported by sufficient authority to establish their own views. "Usher makes out from the Hebrew Bible 4004 years as the term between the creation and the birth of Christ; Josephus, according to Dr. Wills and Mr. Whiston, makes it 4658 years; and Mr. Pezron, with the help of the Septuagint, extends it to 5872 years." I scarcely need remark that Usher's system is the one most generally received. But, while this date is received, in reference to the creation of man, modern geological discoveries have led many learned philosophers and theologians to conclude, that the creation of matter, and of certain animals and vegetables, must have taken place long before that period. And it is now commonly asserted, without any hesitation, by many who have never properly studied the subject, or even seriously thought upon it, that "the earth, or the chaotic matter out of which it was formed, *unquestionably* existed millions of ages before the creation of Adam." Many other things, more extravagant and less plausible, are unhesitatingly asserted in reference to this supposed *pre-Adamic* earth. Indeed, they speak about it with as much confidence and effrontery as though it were an incontrovertible fact, palpably evident, beyond all doubt or contradiction, and rashly brand all with ignorance who have not read and embraced the doctrines of pre-Adamitism.

Dr. Clarke speaks very strongly against such speculative philosophy. He says, "Our various conflicting and contradictory *theories* of the earth are full proof of our ignorance, and strong evidence of our folly. The present dogmatical systems of *geology* are almost the *ne plus ultra* of brain-sick visionaries, and system-mad mortals. They talk as confidently of the structure of the globe, and the

manner and time in which all was formed, as if they had examined every part from the centre to the circumference ; though not a soul of man has ever penetrated two miles in perpendicular depth into the bowels of the earth. And with this scanty defective knowledge they pretend to build systems of the universe and blaspheme the Revelation of God. Poor Souls !”

It may be necessary to make a few remarks on the various ante-Adamic theories. Among those who believe that the primitive world existed prior to the creation of Adam, there is considerable difference of opinion, not only in reference to date, but also with regard to the original design and purpose of the earth, and the manner in which it has been brought to assume its present form and phenomenal aspects.

*First.* One theory is, that “In the beginning,” *i.e.* at some indefinitely remote period, God brought into existence an immense mass of *chaotic* or confused matter ; that this matter was in a fluid state ; that it was by some means set in motion ; that by the laws of cohesion, chemical affinity, &c., it became partially consolidated ; that in process of time, a portion of its solids were separated from the fluid element, and became hard, and formed what is termed the “primary rocks,” which compose the grand framework of the globe, extending upwards to the tops of the most lofty mountains, and downwards beyond the penetration of man, and below all the formations of which human beings have any knowledge. The substance of such rocks we are informed consists of granite, gneiss, mica-slate, hornblende, primary limestone, &c. But they never contain any salt, coal, petrification, or any remains whatever of organized substances.

It is therefore generally admitted, that these primitive rocks, or strata, were formed before the creation of either animals or vegetables. After their formation, a fluid, pulpy matter continued to float with violence over their surface, and to break portions of them in pieces. Hence, the *transition rocks* are said to be composed of "large fragments of the primitive rocks." These contain lime stone, slate, sandstone, &c. Shells are sometimes found in them, but no remains of animals or vegetables. What are termed "the *secondary rocks*," appear next in order. Their principal formations are coal, chalk, secondary limestone, oolite, millstone, grit, &c.; and in these various minerals are found petrified animals and vegetables. From this it is supposed, that during the period between the formation of the *transition rocks* and the *secondary rocks*, vegetables were produced, and certain animals lived and died. "The work of the earth's formation goes on, forming what is called the Tertiary Strata, which consist of beds of marl, clay, sand, &c.," and these, we are informed, "contain abundance of fossil shells, plants, and bones of animals and fishes." What are termed "the volcanic and basaltic rocks," are said to be formed principally by the action of subterraneous heat and eruption. They consist chiefly of basalt, lava, and greenstone. With respect to the *alluvial* or superficial strata, which seem to include the wreck of other broken strata, we all know that they consist of sand, mud, peat, gravel beds, &c. These are ever shifting by the currents of rivers, and many other causes in constant operation. It is supposed by ante-Adamic geologists, that some millions of ages elapsed during the formation of these various stratifications, at the end of which God created or made man

out of the earth. Some who adopt this hypothesis contend, that it is in harmony with the Mosaic account of creation, when both are rightly understood ; others think differently.

It may be proper to remark here, that the notion of our earth's great antiquity, and of monstrous animals, &c. existing prior to the creation of our first parents, is not a discovery of modern geological science, as some suppose. It formed a part of the Chaldee mythology thousands of years ago. According to Eusebius, Josephus, and Lyncellus, it was a doctrine believed by that ancient race of people long ere the strata of the earth were explored by modern geologists. The Chaldeans professed to have received it from a mysterious being, who every day came near to Babylon to instruct them in history and useful arts. This account Eusebius professes to have received from Abydenus, Polyhistor, Apollodorus, and Berous—"four ancient historians whose works are now lost." (See, "North's L'Abbé De Tressa's Mythology," page 10.) This ancient notion of mythological origin is now, in the opinion of some modern philosophers, confirmed beyond any reasonable doubt, by the recent discoveries made in the *tertiary strata* of the earth. On this opinion, therefore, it may be necessary to make a little modest inquiry. As this subject has recently engaged the attention of the most learned and the most accomplished scholars in the philosophic world, however we may differ from them in our views, it will be prudent to express our opinions cautiously and respectfully. After carefully examining some of the best, most learned, and elaborate works on the pre-Adamite antiquity of our earth, we cannot regard it as an established theory—not in the same light as we do

the Pythagorean or Newtonian hypothesis of our solar system ; neither can we see that it perfectly harmonises with the Mosaic account of creation, as many writers and lecturers on this subject have dogmatically asserted. That the theory, under many considerations, is very plausible, and that it abounds with strong, though not conclusive, evidence in favour of the principal doctrines taught therein, no rational and thinking man can deny ; but, after having thought closely and seriously on the subject, we cannot but entertain some doubts as to the soundness and correctness of the theory, and its harmony with sacred and inspired history.

The Mosaic account of creation, as recorded in the first chapter of Genesis, seems to be a plain, simple, narrative ; and we think it ought to be understood and interpreted in the same sense as all such narratives are. Why not ? Because, we are informed, such an interpretation is contradictory to what is palpably demonstrated by recent geological discoveries. This we think is not fully proved. The sentiments expressed by a learned author on this subject are worthy of remark. W. Macgillivray, M.A., F.R.S., &c., author of several works on Natural History and Elementary Science, in his "Manual of Geology," page 222, says :—  
"Various interpretations have been given of the Mosaic history of creation ; and some, considering our geological knowledge in many respects perfect, and conceiving that it contradicted Scripture, have judged the latter to be untrue, and have reasoned thus :—'The world is the work of God, the Scriptures are said to be his also ; now we have examined the world thoroughly, and understand it perfectly ; and, as the doctrines inferred from its phenomena are not in

accordance with the scriptural account, we cannot hesitate a moment in rejecting the latter as spurious.' But our knowledge of the world is different now to what it was a few years ago, when these men so spake; and what to them was true, is clearly in our eyes error; and we know that they misinterpreted the Book of Nature. Wise as we are, then, we have learned just enough to shew us that *our interpretations of nature cannot yet be fairly brought to bear upon the Bible*, however anxious some of us may be to demonstrate the falsehood of its doctrines. We are not yet agreed as to the precise meaning of the first chapter of Genesis. But we may all be very well persuaded, that, as the Scriptures disclose to us truths such as we could not have possibly discovered of ourselves, but which we yet know to be truths, and as they are consistent throughout, they must have emanated from the fountain of truth. 'Let God be true, and every man a liar.' "

And what says the Bible?—"In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is." But we are told that "the first verse in the Bible refers to an event which *transpired* many years, even millions of years, before 'the Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters,' or in other words, before he commenced his six days' work." But what *scriptural* reason have we for believing this? Is not such a mode of interpreting God's Word violent and unnatural—such as piety, solid sense, and a reverence for the sacred text forbid? What would be the consequences if such a method of interpretation were adopted generally? Would it not lead us to adopt a thousand errors? Let the serious and intelligent reader calmly

reflect on this subject, and not be too hasty in embracing the speculative opinions of human philosophy.

2. Another hypothesis, deduced by a learned author, and now in process of development, in order to prove the existence of a pre-Adamic earth, and to show that the Mosaic account of creation is in *harmony* with the present developments of geological discoveries, is that "In the beginning," *i.e.* at some period long before the creation of Adam, God created the material universe, and, in this universe, He "gave a harmonious and beautiful existence to the whole," *i.e.* finished, furnished, and completed it in all respects; and that it was inhabited by certain animals, and intelligent and holy beings; that, on account of the rebellion of the intelligent beings (now called devils), the earth fell into ruin. Hence the phrase, "without form and void," used by the inspired historian, he thinks, according to the original, points out this state of ruin. And, in order to make this theory harmonise with the Mosaic account, he says:—"It was restored in six days, as stated by Moses." Hence, what has generally been understood to be the work of original formation, is regarded by this author as the work of restoration from a state of fallen ruin; *i.e.* that in six days God restored this ruined world, and made it a fit habitation for man whom he then created. And as the *primitive* world was originally inhabited by certain brute animals, as well as by intelligent beings, when it was destroyed, their organic remains were enveloped during the process of the earth's ruin in the various strata wherein they are now found. This hypothesis is said to be in harmony with both Scripture and true

geology. This theory was adopted and strongly advocated by the Rev. Dr. Bayley in his controversy with "Mr. C." on "Geology and Genesis." Hence he remarks, in summing up his arguments:—

"V. *The harmony of the whole with true geology.* True geology has collected a vast number of most interesting phenomena. From them we learn :

"1. That there were conditions of this earth previous to its being inhabited by human beings, in which it had an atmosphere, light, various classes of animals and vegetables, but no inhabitants dealing with material things as men do now.

"2. That there have been changes of so violent and extensive a character as must have greatly deranged the superficial condition of the earth, and extensively, if not universally, destroyed terrestrial life, and very greatly affected the condition of the atmosphere.

"3. These violent perturbations have been followed by long periods of comparative quiet.

"4. Whether the earth's surface, during any geologic change, was ever submerged or otherwise wholly deranged at any one moment, geology has hitherto been unable to discover.

"5. Far larger portions of the present species of terrestrial animals had no existence during those geological periods. They are, therefore, entirely new formations by the omnipotent hand of God.

"6. Man is a species of animal distinct from all other animals. Geology demonstrates that his formation is a recent one, and that his power over nature is indescribably greater than that of any of the animals which geology



reveals." The doctor adds: "To the devout mind these are glorious truths." This, however, remains to be proved, which we apprehend would be a very difficult task.

It seems that Dr. Pye Smith was favourable to the last-mentioned theory, though he does not speak so clearly and distinctly as Dr. Baylee: In one of his arguments, designed to prove the great antiquity of the earth, and that this notion is consistent with Divine revelation, he says: "The magnificent exordium (Gen. i. 1) is a simple declaration of the fact, that the whole dependent universe did, at some point of time in the retrospect of countless ages, derive its existence and properties from the infinite and all-perfect Intelligence. Moses then (verse 2, &c.) takes up the planet which was to be the theatre of those great measures of Jehovah's moral government it was his immediate object to record; and the very terms in which he describes it carry, to our conviction, the intimation of a *pre-existing state, and a dissolution from that state into a dark chaotic decomposed mass.*"

"The language of sacred record, correctly interpreted, presents to us the condition of a disorganized globe, its surface to some depth in a state of watery solution and mixture, and its atmosphere turbid and impermeable to light. Then is related a series of phenomena in which we may, without irreverence, conceive that the Almighty Wisdom acted by *the operation* of those physical laws which itself had established—the attraction of gravitation and that of chemical affinity. The atmosphere was cleared, and filled with light on that atmosphere which was presented to the sun; but it was not yet sufficiently purified to have permitted the heavenly bodies to be seen, had a spectator

existed on the earth. The diurnal motion of the earth was established. The atmosphere was further cleared by the separation of watery vapours, and clouds were formed. The continents and mountains were heaving up, and consequently the waters subsided into the hollows. The agency of creative goodness covered the desiccated ground with vegetables. The atmosphere becomes sufficiently pellucid to render the heavenly luminaries visible. Fishes and birds were created; quadrupeds and reptiles; and finally man."

This theory certainly seems very plausible, but how far it harmonises with the Mosaic narrative of creation, and the formation of our globe and its various productions and inhabitants, I leave the sober and intelligent reader to judge. In my opinion it is a mere human invention, to meet and explain an incomprehensible mystery, involving in it more difficulties than it unravels or explains. (See Cunningham's answer to Dr. Baylee.) Dr. Cummings, in his "Apocalyptic Sketches," says, "the discoveries of modern geologists are, that this earth was once a liquid fire, like liquid lava—that it only cooled down to its outer crust—and that the interior is still an ocean of liquid or molten fire." Page 473.

3. Another hypothesis in favour of the existence of a pre-Adamite earth is, that the six days mentioned by Moses, in which God created the heavens and the earth and all contained therein, were six indefinite periods of great length, which in point of time ranged over millions of ages. The best article I have met with advocating this opinion, is in the *Imperial Magazine*, vol. 1, 1819, written by S. H. Boyd, Esq. His arguments are well arranged, and

apparently conclusive; but, upon a close and critical investigation, like many other human theories on this subject, they are found to lack proof, and to involve other difficulties.

It must be admitted, that there is great difficulty in reconciling the geographical and geological phenomena, recently discovered, with the Mosaic date of creation. Is it not therefore much wiser and much safer, humbly to confess our limited knowledge, than to indulge in speculative theories and extravagant fancies?

May not many of the geological existing phenomena be accounted for by referring to the original state of our earth, without attempting to alter the date of creation, or to the great changes to which it was subjected by the general deluge? I think it will be readily admitted by all who have carefully and seriously studied the subject with an unprejudiced mind, that since the deluge many gradual changes of an important character have been constantly going on.

If our geologists could prove the gradual formation of the various strata in the mineral regions of our globe, or their ante-Adamic existence, according to Dr. Baylee's theory, and that it required, according to the laws and operations of nature, millions of years to bring them to their present state of maturity; and if it could be further proved by our philological theologians that the Mosaic account of creation, according to the principles and rules of criticism, could be made to harmonise with either of these theories—there would still remain an unfathomable mystery in creation. The powers of the human mind are not formed to understand *how* anything came into existence which did not previously exist. Creation is an operation of Almighty

energy, the intelligent comprehension of which must for ever belong exclusively to God. And we must confess that that Almighty Being, who created all things according to his good pleasure and infinite wisdom, could dispose of the matter which he had created, in such chemical equivalents, in such forms, and in such order, as he thought proper, and that, too, irrespective of time or the now existing laws of physical creation. When we look at creation as it now stands sublimely developed in sea, air, earth and sky, we are constrained to exclaim:—

“ Our souls with vast amazement fill,  
And speak the builder God.”

May not *many* of the various zoolite fossil phenomena, which were recently discovered in the various strata, be attributed to the eruptions and physical changes which took place when the Almighty destroyed the earth with the deluge? We think so. But we are told that, “this theory has long since been exploded.” In the opinion of many learned men of *sound and sober judgment* this remains to be proved. It is a remark worthy of our attention, that in (Gen. vi. 13, “God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them *with the earth*,” from which expression we learn that *the earth was destroyed*, as well as mankind, &c. By destroying the earth, we submit, neither the annihilation nor the complete disorganization of the earth to its centre is meant, but an alteration of its constitution—a breaking up of nature, and to a great extent a re-formation of its materials, so far as it relates to the superficial and loose materials. The fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the waters issued as if out of the womb, and broke out

of its *decreed place*—(Job xxxviii. 8 & 10.)—and the earth was destroyed thereby. On this subject Dr. A. Clarke, in corroborating the opinions of Bishop Burnett, and many other eminent men, says: “It appears that an immense quantity of water occupied the centre of the Antediluvian earth; and as these burst forth, by the order of God, the circumambient strata must sink, in order to fill up the vacuum occasioned by the elevated waters. This is probably what is meant by ‘*breaking up the fountains of the great deep,*’ and ‘the water issuing as out of the womb,’ &c. These waters, with the seas on the earth’s surface, might be deemed sufficient to drown the globe, as the waters now on its surface are nearly three fourths of the whole.” See also “Ray’s Physico Theological Discourses,” on this subject.

Dr. Woodward, in his “Natural History of the Earth,” adduces arguments to show the probability that, at the deluge, the whole terrestrial substance was amalgamated with water; after which the different minerals of which it is now composed, settled into beds or strata, according to their respective gravities. This theory, of course, is disputed, and it may be carrying the idea of the destruction of the earth too far. But, without going so far in our belief on this subject as either Dr. Clarke or Dr. Woodward, I think it seems both reasonable and scriptural to suppose, that in connection with the Noahic deluge which *destroyed* the earth, its various strata, especially those nearest the surface, have materially changed, in which ruptures and changes, the skeletons of animals, vegetables, &c. might be deeply imbedded. As for human bones not being discovered with those of unknown animals, Cuvier,

and other celebrated naturalists conjecture, "That the ancient population occupied a comparatively small portion of the globe, and that that portion may not yet have been examined, or it may have been swallowed up by the ocean." It has been argued, in favour of the pre-Adamic theory, that there are trees now standing, the age of which go beyond the given date of the earth, *i.e.* they are more than six thousand years old. If this is correct, it proves that the earth, in those places where such trees are standing, is changeless, which is against the pre-Adamic doctrine of the earth. I hesitate not to say that the pre-Adamic tree argument is groundless, and the opinion which gave birth to it is fallacious and erroneous. It is fit only to be classed with "old wives' fables," or the romance of ancient mythology.

Before dismissing this subject I may just add, that I have carefully consulted the opinions of many learned men, who seem favourable to the ante-Adamic antiquity of our earth, but I cannot reconcile many of their notions and arguments with the Word of God, and, consequently, I do not believe them to be sound. Having given the various opinions and theories of several learned authors, without attempting either to confute or confirm any of them, I leave the subject with the reader, and advise him earnestly to take the *infallible Word of God* for his guide, to read the best works on the subject, think seriously and prayerfully, and then judge for himself. And I may be permitted to caution the beginner in geological studies not to be too dogmatical in his assertions, or to be led away with the mere plausibilities of human theories, as, in connection with philosophical discoveries, fresh light is continually beaming forth on the hidden treasures and mysteries of creation.

## IV. ON THE DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY.

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God must be the Supreme Governor of the universe. This truth asserted in Scripture—Manifested in the history of our world, of Nebuchadnezzar, and in the rise and fall of kingdoms. Sacred and profane history referred to. The Antediluvians. The Sodomites. Moses, Pharaoh, Cyrus, Sennacherib, &c.

God, who is the creator and preserver of all things, is also the supreme governor of the universe, and the disposer of all things. His sovereignty is illimitable and uncontrollable. He is God over all—in heaven, in earth, and in hell. The vast regions of the unseen world, and the innumerable multitude of deathless spirits with which they are peopled, are all under his government, and at his sovereign disposal. God's supreme and universal authority and dominion constitute a subject on which the inspired writers seem to dwell with peculiar delight and complacency. Perhaps no subject, in reference to the Divine character, occupies a wider range, or is more frequently referred to in the inspired volume, than the sovereignty or supremacy of the Almighty. A selection and classification of a few of the most striking passages bearing on this important subject, may not be out of place, and may serve to exhibit the light in which the subject was contemplated by the inspired writers. David blessed the Lord before the great congregation, and said, "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and

the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty : for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine ; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all ; and in thine hand is power and might ; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all." 1 Chron. xxix. 11, 12. "I know that the Lord is great, and is above all gods. Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places. He maketh lightnings for the rain : he bringeth the wind out of his treasures. Thy name, O Lord, endureth for ever ; and thy memorial, O Lord, throughout all generations." Psalm cxxxv. 5—13. "For who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord ? Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord ? God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him. O Lord God of hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto thee ? or to thy faithfulness round about thee ? Thou rulest the raging of the sea : when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them. Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces, as one that is slain : thou hast scattered thine enemies with thy strong arm. The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine : as for the world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them. Thou hast a mighty arm : strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand. Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne : mercy and truth shall go before thy face." Psalm lxxxix. 6—11, 13, 14.

"The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice ; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof. Clouds and darkness are round about him : righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. His lightnings enlightened the



world: the earth saw, and trembled. The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. For thou, Lord, art high above all the earth: thou art exalted far above all gods." Psalm xcvi. 1—5, 9.

"God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. And his brightness was as the light; he had horns coming out of his hand: and there was the hiding of his power. He stood, and measured the earth: he beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: his ways are everlasting. I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction: and the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble. Was the Lord displeased against the rivers? was thine anger against the rivers? was thy wrath against the sea, that thou didst ride upon thine horses and thy chariots of salvation? The mountains saw thee, and they trembled: the overflowing of the water passed by: the deep uttered his voice, and lifted up his hands on high. The sun and moon stood still in their habitation: at the light of thine arrows they went, and at the shining of thy glittering spear," &c. Hab. iii. 3—11.

The above passages are not merely celebrations of his Divine power and majesty, but they also set forth the boundless and uncontrollable sovereignty of Jehovah, as reigning and ruling over all creatures and all worlds.

And what a striking testimony we have of the sovereign greatness of the Almighty in the subjugation and acknowledgment of king Nebuchadnezzar, who, in the pride of his heart, set himself up as the rival of the Most

High. Being made sensible of the infinite greatness of the Divine Majesty, he says:—"I thought it good to show the signs and wonders that the High God hath wrought toward me. How great are his signs! and how mighty are his wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation." Dan. iv. 2, 3. And in the subsequent part of this chapter the sovereign power of the Almighty is more strikingly exhibited in the complete subjugation of this haughty monarch, and in his restoration from a state of brutal degradation and insanity, to his former exalted position as a great and mighty prince.

"All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. The king spake, and said: Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" While these vain thoughts, relative to his own honour and majesty, were passing through his mind, and inflating his haughty soul with ideas of his regal authority and magisterial greatness, God determined to take his kingdom from him, and reduce him to a state of unparalleled degradation. "*While the word was in the king's mouth*, there fell a voice from heaven, saying: O, king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom *is departed* from thee. And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, *and giveth it to whomsoever he will*. The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon

Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and 'did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws. And at the end of the days Nebuchadnezzar lifted up his eyes unto heaven, and his understanding returned to him, and he blessed the Most High, and praised and honoured him that liveth for ever and ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" And Nebuchadnezzar said, " I praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase." Dan. iv. 28—37. How many kings and kingdoms have been overthrown, and monarchies established by the same Almighty hand? Many ancient empires, which we read of in history, have now totally dissappeared: their geographical territory remains, but where are their kings and senators? where are their armies and navies? where their statesmen and laws? &c. All the essential characteristics of their nationality have long since been obliterated. New nations have sprung up, fresh forms of government established, and mighty empires raised on the ruins of fallen kingdoms: and in these great revolutions of the political universe, as well as in the physical changes of our globe, we trace the foot-prints of the invisible Jehovah. The unseen hand of the Almighty, in the operations of his providential government, is the great moving cause: hence, history pro-

claims the being of a God who is almighty in power, wonderful in counsel, and excellent in wisdom, working wonders. "The Most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men, and giveth them to whomsoever he will. He maketh poor, and maketh rich: He bringeth low, and raiseth up. Riches and honour come from God: and in his hand it is to make great and to give strength unto all. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, and causeth them to sit among princes." "The Lord is King for ever," says the Psalmist, "and his dominion is an everlasting dominion." "He is the blessed and only Potentate; the King of kings, and the Lord of lords," able to create, to save, and to destroy. "The Lord of Hosts, he is king of glory, honour and majesty are before him, strength and beauty are in his sanctuary." The majestic greatness and glory of the eternal Jehovah are indescribable. Who can make known to the sons of men the glorious majesty of his kingdom, and the greatness of his excellency? There are none in heaven who can be compared to him: none among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto him. Moses, exhorting the children of Israel to obedience, after God had restored to them the two tables containing the moral law, lays down the requirements of Jehovah; after which he proclaims the Divine Sovereignty in the following sublime language: "Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is. For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward." And similar declarations, expressive of the greatness and

glorious majesty of the great Eternal, are to be found in every part of the Bible.

Before dismissing this subject, it may be proper to turn our attention to a few facts recorded in sacred history, which illustrate the sovereign power of God. The Antedeluvians and the Sodomites provoked him to wrath ; the former he destroyed with water, the latter with fire and brimstone. Pharaoh, king of Egypt, magnified himself against the Lord, who chastised him with ten dreadful plagues, and then overthrew him and his mighty army in the Red Sea. God raised Moses from the banks of the Nile to the Imperial Court of Egypt ; afterwards he fled for safety into the land of Midian, and kept the flocks of Jethro in Horeb, where God appeared unto him in a flame of fire, and commanded him to go and deliver the injured and oppressed Hebrews. This was accomplished. Korah and his companions rebelled against God and Moses in the wilderness ; and the Almighty caused the earth to open and swallow them up. Thus the elements are the servants of Jehovah, to execute vengeance on those who rebel against him. David was brought by the hand of God from following his father's flock in the wilderness, and set upon the throne of Israel ; on the other hand he brought down Nebuchadnezzar from the throne of Babylon, and drove him into the fields to feed like an ox until he knew and acknowledged that the Most High ruleth over the kingdoms of men, and giveth them to whomsoever he pleaseth. It was God who gave Jerusalem into the hands of the king of Babylon, and afterwards gave Babylon into the hands of Cyrus, the Medo-Persian king, who made her a ruinous

heap, and "*a habitation for dragons,*" &c. Sennacherib, the mighty king of Assyria, reproached and despised the God of heaven, by his representative Rabshakeh; but the Almighty "put a hook in his nose and a bridle in his mouth;" and after laying the flower of his grand army silent in death, he turned him back to his own country, where he was miserably and shamefully slain by his own sons in the house of Nisroch, his idol god. Hence the Almighty can soon chastise his foes and destroy his enemies. "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his anointed." But "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision." "He shall break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges." "Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling." "Allelujah! the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth."

## V. ON DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

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The word Providence only used once in Scripture. There is a Divine Providence; this is evident from the manner in which God has preserved his Word and his people. The doctrine of Providence explained. Its various manifestations classified. Substantially asserted in Scripture. Various kinds of providence spoken of. A particular Providence, proved from sacred history; consistent with reason. Providence of God sometimes very mysterious. Chance considered. Quotation from Wesley. Lines by Cowper.

INTIMATELY connected with the idea of *Divine Sovereignty*, is the doctrine of *Divine Providence*. The term *providence* occurs only once in the whole of the sacred writings; and then, not in relation to the Divine Being, but to Felix, the governor of Judea. Acts xxiv. 2. Tertullus the Roman orator, who was employed to plead against St. Paul, commenced his speech by flattering the unrighteous governor in the following language:—"Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy *providence*." This is the only passage in Scripture where the word providence occurs. The meaning of the original is *prudence*. It was a compliment paid by the Orator to Felix, either in reference to his wisdom, as displayed in the prudent judgment which he had manifested in his magisterial capacity, or in the government of the province of Judea. But, although the word does not occur in Scripture, in reference to God, we

hesitate not to say, there is such a thing as *Divine Providence*. This is evident from the facts already adduced, viz. that there is a God, the Creator of all things, the Sovereign Ruler of the universe, and the Preserver of men and beasts. It is also evident from the various blessings we enjoy as dependent creatures on his free bounty, from the awful judgments which have been inflicted upon the wicked, and from the astonishing preservation of his Word and his Church throughout a long succession of dark and bloody ages. Notwithstanding the attempts of earth and hell to destroy the Bible, and to annihilate the Christian Church, the good Providence of God has taken care of both; so that we have still God's pure Word, and a living, active Church, holding the faith once delivered to the saints. These facts, I say, prove to us the Providence of God.

By the Providence of God, we are not to understand any separate attribute of the Divine Mind, whether natural or moral, or the Sovereignty of Jehovah, but the care and superintendence which God exercises over his creatures, and the methods which he employs in correcting the rebellious.

Perhaps the doctrine of God's Providence is in no place more strikingly and strongly expressed than in Acts xvii., where St. Paul declares to the Athenians, "God that made the world, and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all, life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their



habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: *for in him we live, and move, and have our being.*" Here the doctrine of Divine Providence is taught, in the fullest sense of the word. "*In him we live, and move, and have our being.*" No words or form of expression could more clearly and fully express our continual dependence on God. The design of the Apostle was to teach the Athenians, and all who read this statement, that our very existence, and the operations connected with our existence, are sustained by the Almighty Lord of all. This doctrine is consistent with the true and sound philosophy which was taught by certain of the Athenian Poets. Mr. Wesley thinks the Apostle referred to Aratus, who lived about three hundred years before this time, and to the "*Hymn of Cleanthus to Jupiter, or the Supreme Being: one of the purest and finest pieces of natural religion in the whole world of Pagan antiquity.*"

In order that we may better understand all that appears to be comprehended under the doctrine of Divine Providence, divines have classified its manifestations, and denoted such manifestations of the divine interposition by different names. Hence we read of—

1. *Immediate Providence*: which signifies something which the Almighty does himself, without condescending to use any means or instrumentality.

2. *A Mediate Providence*: i.e. the Almighty acting by an intervening agent, or what is exercised in the use of means.

3. There is what is termed an *Ordinary Providence*: viz. that which is exercised in the common course of nature, and by a chain of causes.

4. An *Extraordinary Providence*: which signifies something out of the common way, as a miraculous operation.

5. There is a *Common Providence*: which relates to the government of the whole world.

6. A *Special Providence*: which relates to the care and preservation of the Church.

7. A *Universal Providence*: by which we understand the Divine Will upholding, sustaining, and preserving all things, visible and invisible, in the universe ; and,

8. A *Particular Providence*: which relates to individual actions, and to the most minute circumstances. This, however, is a doctrine to which many people object. The opinion entertained by them is, that "The providence of God extends no further than to a general superintendence of the laws of nature, without interposing in the particular concerns of individuals." This theory is, however, in the first place, contrary to Scripture. Many instances are recorded in the inspired volume, showing that the Almighty has, in certain cases, stepped out of the ordinary course of his general providence to deliver, support, and comfort his people. I need only mention the history of Joseph, the deliverance of the Hebrews out of Egyptian captivity, the preservation of Daniel in the den of lions, and the Hebrew worthies in the burning furnace, to convince the Christian reader that there is such a thing as a *Particular Providence*. In the second place, it is inconsistent with reason. It renders the government of the Almighty altogether loose and contingent, and would leave no room for repose or trust in the protection of heaven. The majority of human affairs would be allowed to fluctuate

in a fortuitous course without moving in any regular direction, and without tending to any special design.

The uniform doctrine of the sacred writings is, that throughout the universe nothing happens without God, that his hand is ever active, that nothing is too great or unwieldy for his management, nor is anything so minute and insignificant as to be below his inspection and care. While he is guiding the sun in his course, and holding together the heavens in their appointed place—while he rules among the empires of the earth, stilling the raging of the waters and the tumults of the people—he is at the same time watching with a fatherly eye over his people, however mean may be their earthly condition or obscure their abode in life. The Saviour said to his disciples, “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.” Many pious and learned divines have written rather extensively on the Special and Particular Providence of God; viz. Charnock, Flavel, Hoakwell, Wallaston, Thomas, and many others. The following quotation is the substance of a paragraph, abridged and altered, taken from one of the above authors:—

“How the Providence of God interposes with human affairs—by what means it influences the thoughts and counsels of men, and yet leaves them to the influence of choice—are subjects too mysterious for us to understand, and which have given occasion to many intricate controversies. Let us remember that the manner in which God influences the motions of all the heavenly bodies, the nature of that secret power by which he is ever directing the sun, moon, and stars in their course, are matters which we

cannot fully understand, no more than we can understand the manner in which he influences the counsels of men. But, though the mode of divine operation remains unknown, the fact of an overruling influence is, in many cases, equally certain in the moral as it is in the natural world. We cannot indeed conceive of God acting as the governor of the world, unless his government extends either directly or indirectly to all the events which take place therein. It is on the supposition of a *Particular Providence* that our worship and prayers to God are founded. All his perfections would be utterly insignificant to us if they were not exercised, on every occasion, as the circumstances of his creatures require. He would be no more than an unconcerned spectator of the behaviour of his subjects, and regard the obedient and the rebellious with an equal eye. The experience of every one more or less bears testimony to the doctrine of Divine Providence. We refer not only to those sudden and unexpected vicissitudes which have sometimes astonished whole nations, and drawn their attention to the conspicuous hand of heaven. We need not appeal to the history of statesmen and warriors, to the ambitious and enterprising; we need only reflect on many instances connected with our own lives, in order to convince us that we are held in subjection to a higher Power, on whom depends the accomplishment of our wishes. We have fondly projected our favourite plans; we have thought that we had forecast and provided for all that might happen; but, alas! some little event has occurred, unforeseen by us, and in its consequences at first seemingly inconsiderable, but in the end it has blighted all our hopes. The happiness of man depends on secret springs,

too nice and delicate to be adjusted by human art, or to be foreseen by human prudence. It requires a favourable combination of external circumstances with the state of a man's own mind. To accomplish on every occasion such a combination, is far beyond his power; but it is what God can at all times effect, as the whole series of external causes is arranged according to his pleasure, and "the hearts of all men are in his hands."

We sometimes hear it asserted that circumstances occur by chance, or accidentally. Such words and sentiments are frequently expressed in relation to the affairs of human life; but they are words without meaning; or, so far as they have any meaning or signification, they are terms substituted for the unknown operations of Providence; for it is certain, that in the whole of Jehovah's universe, nothing can take place or come to pass without a cause, or beyond his control. In that profound chaos of human affairs, where we can see no light; where all is disorder and confusion—all is clear and comprehensive to the Infinite One, who directs and governs the whole according to his good pleasure, and brings forward or controls every event, and at all times and in every place accomplishes his sovereign pleasure. "The Lord sitteth on the flood." He maketh the wrath of man to praise him, as he maketh the hail and the rain to obey him. "The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all." "A man's heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps."

To follow the leadings or openings of Providence, means no more than to act agreeably to the dictates of prudence, under any particular circumstance, according to the direction or determination of the Word or law of God.

I shall conclude this subject with a brief quotation from Mr. Wesley's Sermon on the "Imperfection of Human Knowledge."

"Incomprehensible to us are many of the divine dispensations, with regard to particular families. We cannot at all comprehend why he raises some to wealth, honour, and power; and why, in the mean time, he depresses others with poverty and various afflictions. \* \* \* \* No reason appears to us, either for the prosperity of the one, or the adversity of the other. As little can we account for the divine dispensations with regard to individuals. We know not why the lot of this man is cast in Europe, the lot of that man in the wilds of America; why one is born of rich or noble, and the other of poor parents; why the father and mother of one are strong and healthy, those of another weak and diseased, in consequence of which he drags a miserable being all the days of his life, exposed to want, and pain, and a thousand temptations, from which he finds no way to escape. How many are from their infancy hedged in with such relations, that they seem to have no chance (as some speak), no possibility of being useful to themselves or others? Why are they, antecedent to their own choice, entangled in such connexions? Why are hurtful people so cast in their way, that they know not how to escape them? And why are useful persons hid out of their sight, or snatched away from them at their utmost need? O God, how unsearchable are thy counsels! too deep to be fathomed by our reason; *and thy ways* of executing those counsels *not to be traced* by our wisdom." (Vol. ii., pp. 145-6.)

**"God moves in a mysterious way,  
His wonders to perform ;  
He plants his footsteps in the sea,  
And rides upon the storm.  
Deep in unfathomable mines  
Of never-failing skill,  
He treasures up his bright designs,  
And works his sovereign will."**

## VI. ON GOD'S NATURAL ATTRIBUTES.

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**Natural attributes defined.** *Omnipotence of God* a primitive attribute. This attribute frequently ascribed to God in Scripture; sublimely manifested in his works; in the magnitude and revolutions of our globe; in the solar system; and in the sidereal heavens. Quotation from Young. Reflections on the number and magnitude of God's works. The *Omnipresence* of God:—this doctrine defined, and various opinions considered. Dr. Pye Smith on the "*Divine Immensity*." *Omnipresence* ascribed to God in Scripture. Reflections on the phraseology of Scripture employed to denote the Divine *Omnipresence*. The Divine Ubiquity urged from a consideration of his works. What are we to understand by the laws of nature. Quotation from Dr. Paley—Cowper's poems. Objections founded on the limits of the universe, answered. *Omniscience of God*. What are we to understand by *Omniscience*:—A. M. Ramsey's opinion, that it is a mere capability of knowing all things, *confuted*. Mr. Finney's remarks on this subject. The perfect and unlimited knowledge of God asserted in Scripture. *The Immutability of God*. God must, in his nature and essential perfections, be eternally the same. This subject philosophically considered; proved from the character of God's moral government in all ages of the world. General reflections on the greatness and glorious character of God.

If we be fully satisfied of the existence of God—and we cannot reasonably hold ourselves in doubt; and if it be further admitted, that he is the Creator of all things, and that he is the Preserver and Supreme Governor of the universe; we cannot do otherwise than conclude that he is a Being of infinite perfections, viz. that he is almighty in power; that he fills all space; that he is omniscient, or infinite in wisdom, and unchangeable in his nature; that he is infinitely good, holy, and merciful. These attributes



seem essential to him as the Creator, Upholder, and Governor of all things; as nothing less could qualify him for the management of the universe.

The attributes of God are of two kinds, viz. *natural* and *moral*; or, at least, they are generally so designated by theologians. By natural attributes, are meant those which pertain to the divine character by a natural necessity, or whatever is attributable to him as essential to his existence, that which has no moral character comprehended in its nature. Therefore the natural attributes of God are *Eternity*, *Spirituality*, *Omnipotence*, *Omnipresence*, *Omniscience*, and *Immutability*—as these qualities and capacities seem to constitute his essential nature. God's *moral attributes* are, of course, such as constitute his moral nature, or the dispositions and eternal state of his mind: such as Benevolence, Justice, Mercy, Truth, Wisdom, and Holiness. We shall in this essay consider more particularly his Natural Attributes. But, having before, when we investigated the Essence, &c., of Deity, proved his Spirituality and Eternity, we shall now, in the first place, consider—

#### I. THE OMNIPOTENCE OF GOD.

That the Eternal Jehovah is almighty in power, no intelligent mind can for one moment doubt. Perhaps no divine attribute, whether natural or moral, is more strikingly developed in its manifestations and operations than that of Omnipotence. It has been technically designated one of the *primitive* attributes of Deity; because power which is infinite seems to comprehend or to include in it several other attributes, such as Wisdom, Omniscience, Omnipresence, Long-suffering, &c., i.e. God has a capacity to know all things—He is everywhere present at the same time—

He sees all things, and is able to bear all things; for the word *Omnipotence*, or *Almightiness*, does not merely imply physical strength to sustain the material universe, but also ability to perform any action in reference to either physical or mental faculty. Such power belongs only to God, and must be essential to his nature, as an infinite, independent, and all-perfect Being.

1. This attribute is frequently ascribed to God in Scripture, and in many instances it is expressed in language the most sublime and impressive. We select the following: "O Lord my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty. Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain. He hangeth the earth upon nothing. He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds; his power raiseth the waves of the sea, and his wisdom restraineth their fury. He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into watersprings. O Lord God of Hosts, who is a strong God like unto thee? Thou hast a mighty arm: strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand; he thunders peals, and we see the lightning flash." In the 18th Psalm the mighty power of God is thus described: "The earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth. There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness was under his feet. And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind. The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hailstones and coals of fire. The foundations of the world were

discovered at thy rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils."

The prophet Isaiah, (ch. xl.) speaking of the Omnipotence of God, says: "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing and vanity. To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him? It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in; that bringeth the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity. To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One." Jeremiah, (ch. xxxii. 17-19.) addressing the Almighty, says: "Ah, Lord God! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched-out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee. The Great, the Mighty God, the Lord of Hosts, is his name, great in counsel, and mighty in work." When God appeared to Abraham, he said unto him: "I am the Almighty God." Gen. xvii. Again we read:—"And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the Lord: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty" (El-Shaddai). And in the primitive ages of the world, he was principally known by the name of El-

Shaddai, which signifies *God Almighty*, or *God All-sufficient*. Hence he is designated "The Almighty" about thirty times in the Book of Job; and in many passages this appellation. (El-Shaddai) is given to him as expressive of his Omnipotence.

2. The Almighty power of God is also sublimely demonstrated in creation, or the works of nature. As the words of his mouth proclaim his eternal power and supreme dominion, so do the works of his hand. "Lift up your eyes on high," says the prophet Isaiah, "and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their hosts by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth." The Psalmist, as though struck with astonishment at the number and magnitude of God's works, exclaimed: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man that that thou art mindful of him." Psalm viii. 3, 4.

But if we contemplate *merely* the earth on which we live, which is but a very small portion of a comparatively small system, we shall be convinced that it is sustained, moved, and guided by an almighty power. Look at its wide extended plains and prairies; its waving forests and verdant hills; its pyramidical rocks and majestic mountains; its numerous islands and unfathomed seas; its sandy deserts and vast continents; its mighty rivers and rolling oceans—the whole forming a *terraqeous* globe of twenty-four thousand eight hundred and sixty-nine miles in circumference, suspended like a ball in the air—or, according to divine declaration, "He hangeth the earth upon nothing"—whirling round at the rate of a thousand miles per hour, and

moving regularly in its orbit (of six hundred millions of miles) at a speed which is inconceivable (68,000 miles an hour). No power but that which is almighty could sustain our world, hold together its material form, and guide it in its diurnal and annual revolutions.

And, if we turn our attention to our solar system, and the sidereal heavens, still more sublime and awful appearances rise to our view. Our solar system comprehends the sun and the surrounding planets, the number of which is yet unknown. And what a marvellous display of Omnipotence is developed in this stupendous fabric of creation! Mathematical astronomers differ in their opinions as to the exact dimensions of the various bodies which have been discovered in the planetary system; but such disagreements are comparatively inconsiderable, when we take into account their immense magnitude. One writer says, "The diameter of the sun is 886,473 English miles;" another, more modern, says it is "880,000 miles." This difference is certainly considerable, viz. 6473 miles. But, lest it should be thought there is an attempt to exaggerate, I will give the smallest diameters *I have met with*, of each planet, which diameters in English miles stand as follow:—The Sun, 880,000; Mercury, 3191; Venus, 7630; the Earth, 7912; Mars, 4135; Jupiter, 86,396; Saturn, 79,000; Uranus, 35,000; Vesta, 276; Ceres, 163; Juno, 119; Pallas, 110. (Neptune\* unknown.) Now, supposing all these heavenly bodies to be consolidated, or put together, the solid contents of such a mass would be inconceivable; and then add to the above all the *secondary planets* or satel-

\* This planet was discovered by Le Verrier, and is now ascertained to be about two thousand nine hundred millions of miles from the Sun.

lites, attendant on the *primary planets*, together with the splendid rings of Saturn, the bright belts of Jupiter, and the immense mass of atmospheric and ethereal fluid floating round the solid bodies; and then let us consider the immense space allotted in creation to these planetary bodies. Here, all modes of calculations totally fail to convey to our minds correct ideas in reference to their amazing distances. We are now furnished with mathematical proof that the sun is placed in the centre of our system, and that each planet moves in an orbit of its own round the sun, and consequently each planet is said to be at a certain distance from the sun, though its distance, at different periods of its revolution, varies. The distance of Uranus from the Sun is 1,820,000,000 English miles, and consequently the area of the space which its orbit comprehends must be about 13,287,121,846,866,907,936 square miles; and Dr. Dick says, "It moves round the Sun in the space of eighty-four years, in an orbit eleven thousand million miles in circumference, at the rate of fifteen thousand miles an hour." What a description we have here given us of the vast dominion, and almighty power of the Great Eternal.

But the whole collective planetary system is but a mere speck in the great empire of creation. Beside the planetary bodies in our solar system, known and unknown, and the comets connected therewith, some of which are immensely large, there is an innumerable multitude of fixed stars, each of which is considered to be a sun standing in the centre of a system surrounded with revolving worlds. This idea is embodied in the following lines of Young:—

"One sun by day, by night *ten thousands* shine  
And light us deeper into Deity."

Another Poet says:—

“ Each lucid point which glows in yonder sky,  
Informs a system of its boundless space,  
And fills with glory its appointed place;  
With beams unborrowed, brightens other skies,  
And worlds unknown to thee with heat and light supplies.”  
*Barker.*

If these ideas only approach correctness, how immense must be the distances of these heavenly bodies from each other, and from this orb on which we live. Dr. Bradley, after endeavouring by mathematical experiments to ascertain the distance of one of the nearest fixed stars from the earth, assures us that it cannot be less than 103,130 times the breadth of the earth's orbit, or *nineteen billions five hundred and ninety-seven thousand millions of miles*, and that the swiftest motion of which we have any knowledge—viz. that of light, which passes from the sun to the earth, a distance of *ninety-five millions of miles*, in eight minutes and thirteen seconds—would require more than three years to pass from the nearest fixed star to the earth. And Huygens, another celebrated astronomer, pursued his enquiries so far as to conclude that it is not impossible that there may be stars at such an immense distance, that their light has not yet reached the earth since the creation. Hence, he observes, “It is plain that the most distant stars in the nebulous zone of the milky-way must be many thousands of times farther off than the nearest fixed star, and light must require many thousand years in coming from them to the earth.” The late Professor Playfair seemed to be of the same opinion, and expressed his ideas in similar terms. This sentiment is also expressed by a poet, to me unknown:—

“Fields of radiance, whose unfading light  
Has travelled the profound six thousand years,  
Nor yet arrived in sight of mortal thing.”

Young says :—

“How distant some of the *nocturnal suns* !  
So distant (says the sage) 'twere not absurd  
To doubt, if beams set out at nature's birth,  
Are yet arriv'd at this so foreign world,  
Though nothing half so rapid as their flight.  
An eye of awe and wonder let us roll,  
And roll for ever. Who can satiate sight  
In such a scene, in such an ocean wide  
Of deep astonishment? where depth, height, and breadth  
Are lost in their extremes; and where to count  
The thick-sown glories in this field of fire,  
Perhaps a Seraph's computation fails.”

Elihu Burritt, the learned American blacksmith, says:  
“In the space around our solar system devoid of stars, there is room in one dimension, or in one straight line, for 12,000 solar systems; in two dimensions, or in one plane, there is room for 130 millions of solar systems; and in the actual sideral space of three dimensions, there is room for 1,500,000,000,000 (one billion five hundred thousand millions) of solar systems the size of our own.” These calculations he bases on the discoveries made by the late Dr. Herschel in the milky-way. Such discoveries of ethereal space, and of the celestial luminaries, wherein the Omnipotence of Jehovah is sublimely operating, stretch before our mental vision an amazing circle of created existence, and open to us fields of glory which were formerly unknown to the human race. Let us remember that the power of God is truly Almighty and measureless. “Lo! these are only part of his ways:



the thunder of his power who can understand?" Think of that power which originally gave existence to these innumerable worlds and myriads of celestial systems, which sustains all that exist, whether of matter or mind, throughout the immensity of creation; a power which nothing can successfully oppose; a power which can operate in the most perfect manner, at the same moment of time, in every part of God's wide dominion, with the utmost ease, and without the least confusion, error, or imperfection. How inconceivable must be this attribute of the Divine character! And, as he is eternal and self-existent, he can never be exhausted; He is ever acting, yet he never fainteth, nor is he weary.

Such ideas of the boundless dimensions of creation, and the vastness of Jehovah's eternal power, to illiterate minds, may seem to border on extravagance, and may be regarded as superfluous speculations; but when we consider that "the universe is the work of infinite power, prompted by infinite goodness, and having infinite space in which to exert itself," we shall see that works on such a grand and majestic scale are becoming the dignity and glory of such a Being as the Omnipotent Jehovah, and that they afford delightful illustrations of his almighty power and glorious majesty.

It is almost superfluous to add, that the Almighty cannot do anything which implies or involves a palpable contradiction, because such actions are impossible in their nature. This might be illustrated by analogy or comparison to almost any extent; but let it suffice to say, God cannot do anything which is repugnant to his own perfections, either in relation to himself or to his creatures. He cannot annihilate his own existence, because he is eternal; he cannot limit his perfections, because he is infinite; he

cannot lie, because he is a Being of eternal and immutable truth; he cannot love vice, or sin, neither can he hate holiness, for this would be inconsistent with his essential and immaculate purity. For any person therefore to contend that God is not almighty, because he cannot do that which is contrary to his own nature and perfections, is absurd and impious. We may conclude, as Bishop Pearson observes, that God is “absolutely omnipotent, because he is able to effect all things consistent with his perfections; and, by not being able to do anything repugnant to the same perfections, he *demonstrates himself subject to no infirmity or imbecility.*”

## II. GOD IS OMNIPRESENT.

By ubiquity or omnipresence is meant, that God is essentially present in every place. This attribute is peculiar to Deity. He is locally present throughout immensity of space. This notion of the Divine omnipresence is objected to by some, who understand this attribute merely to signify omniscience, or a perfect knowledge of all things: and they argue that the essential ubiquity of God implies the extension of the Divine nature, and that to say that God is everywhere present, “is substantially to maintain that only part of God is in any one place.” They maintain also that “pure mind or spirit cannot have any relation to space, any more than time or thought.” To such objections we might remark—

1. That God is a real existence, and therefore must certainly and necessarily sustain relations to space and place; but, as he is a *spiritual existence*, it necessarily follows that such relation to locality is not the same relation as that of matter. This is evident to every person who is

at all conversant with the philosophy of matter and mind. Matter fills that portion of space which it occupies, to the exclusion of other material substances; but God being a pure spirit, his presence does not exclude material substances from occupying the same space. Hence—

2. The idea that God's essential omnipresence implies extension, and consequently that only a part of him is in one place, is unphilosophical and erroneous. Such notions cannot be applicable to *pure mind*, and such a theory seems very much like an attempt to confound things which essentially differ. Men who are best skilled in the science of mind say, that wherever mind is, there are all the properties of mind too, and may be exercised, whether occupying one or all points of space. Extension and divisibility are qualities of matter, and not of spirit.

Dr. Pye Smith, in his definition of the *Divine Immen-*  
*sity*, &c., makes some very judicious statements which have a direct bearing on the subject now under consideration. He says, "There is, with God, no diffusion or contraction, no extension nor circumscription, or any such *relation to space* as belongs to limited natures. God is equally near to, and equally far from, every point of space and every atom of the universe. He is universally and immediately *present*, not as a body, but as a spirit—not by motion, or penetration, or filling, as would be predicated of a diffused fluid, or in any way as if the infinity of God were composed of a countless number of finite parts, but in a way *peculiar* to his own *spiritual* and perfect nature, and of which we can form no conception. The adorable Supreme is incomparably more intimately present to and with and in us, than our own intellectual nature is to ourselves or our own con-

sciousness." That God is universally and equally present is evident—

1. *From what is said of him in the Bible.* From the many passages which affirm this important doctrine, we select the following :—"Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know? the measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea." Job xi. 7—9. "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven, and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee." 1 Kings viii. 27. "O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine uprising; thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassed my path, and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me," &c. Psalm cxxxix. 1—11. In Jeremiah xxiii. 23, we find the following question put forth by Jehovah himself: "Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? do not

I fill heaven and earth ? saith the Lord." The prophet Amos (chap. ix. 1—4), shewing the impossibility of the rebellious Israelites fleeing from the presence of God, says: " I saw the Lord standing upon the altar: and he said, Smite the lintel of the door, that the posts may shake: and cut them in the head, all of them; and I will slay the last of them with the sword: he that fleeth of them shall not flee away; and he that escapeth of them shall not be delivered. Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down: and though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence; and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them," &c. And the apostle Paul says: " He is not far from every one of us; for in him we live, and move, and have our being." The attentive and intelligent reader will have observed, that in the above passages the omnipresence of God is represented as implying extension or a diffusion of the Divine essence; but this is owing to the peculiar character of scriptural language. In condescension to the imbecility and limited attainments of the human intellect, divine truth is revealed and written so as to suit the capacities of the bulk of mankind. As a learned author very properly remarks, " Metaphysical or philosophical preciseness is not the character of scriptural composition." Its eternal truths are expressed in striking and emphatic language, such as is calculated to make an impression on every class of mind. By the presence of God filling heaven and earth, we are not to understand that he has a subtle, extended body which pervades immensity or infinity of space, but

that he is spiritually and perfectly present in every place. This may be argued—

2. *From his works.* He must exist where he works or exercises a *personal agency*. If, therefore, actions and effects, which manifest the wisdom, power, and goodness of God, are continually produced everywhere, God, who is the author of these actions, must be present wherever they are. The matter, for instance, which composes the material universe, is evidently lifeless and thoughtless, and is consequently of itself incapable of the least motion, or of producing any effect which requires a display of wisdom and power. Yet the matter of our world, and the countless millions of small particles which compose the surrounding atmosphere, are continually moving, so as to produce the most sublime effects; and these ever-shifting and changing phenomena and splendid exhibitions of nature, proclaim the being and presence of God. It is true, we cannot see him with our bodily eyes, because he is a pure spirit; yet this is no proof that he is not present. We can see his agents, and we believe him to be present in every agent in nature, and that he is the great moving, actuating cause of those continual motions and changes which are going on in the material universe.

In every part of creation which lies within the range of human investigation, are perceived the existence and exertion of a power which either mediately or immediately proceeds from the eternal Deity. For instance, in every part and point of space which has been explored or discovered, there exists what is called the *attraction of gravitation*, i.e. a power or law which gives weight to bodies and tends to draw them to the *centre of gravitation*. There is also *cohe-*

sive and *chemical affinity*, i.e. the tendency of particles or elements to unite, so as to organize and form compound substances. And as Dr. Paley observes, "In every kingdom in nature, and in every corner of space in which there is anything which can be examined by us, we see contrivance and design. The only reflection which arises in our minds from this view of the world around us is, that the laws of nature everywhere prevail; that they are uniform and universal. But what do we mean by the laws of nature? or in fact any law? Does not law imply a lawgiver? Are not effects produced by power, and not by laws? A law cannot execute itself; a law refers us to an agent." We conclude, then, from the laws and light of nature, that the Supreme, All-perfect, Eternal Mind essentially exists in all parts of space. "No reason can be assigned for excluding him from any part, which would not exclude him from all; he therefore must fill all space with his Infinite Being," or to speak more correctly, he occupies all space, and is essentially present in every place.

3. *The operations of nature are ascribed to him in the Bible.* "He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing. He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds; and the cloud is not rent under them. He holdeth back the face of his throne, and spreadeth his cloud upon it. He hath compassed the waters with bounds, until the day and night come to an end. The pillars of heaven tremble and are astonished at his reproof. He divideth the sea with his power, and by his understanding he smiteth through the proud. By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens; his hand hath formed the crooked serpent," &c. Job xxvi. 7—13. From these and many

similar passages we learn, that the laws of nature, when traced to their origin, are the agents of God. Material causes are nothing more than instruments in the powerful hand of the Almighty. He pervades and actuates the whole of the material universe, and at the same time sustains and invigorates all created minds. These sentiments are expressed in the following beautiful lines by Cowper:—

“Some say that in the origin of things,  
 When all creation started into birth,  
 The infant elements received a law,  
 From which they swerve not since; that under force  
 Of that controlling ordinance they move,  
 And need not his immediate hand, who first  
 Prescribed their course, to regulate it now;  
 Thus dream they, and contrive to save a God  
 The incumbrance of his own concerns, and spare  
 The Great Artificer of all that moves  
 The stress of continued act, the pain  
 Of unremitted vigilance and care,  
 As too labourious and severe a task.  
 But how should matter occupy a change,  
 Dull as it is, and satisfy a law  
 So vast in its demands, unless impell'd  
 To causeless service by a ceaseless force,  
 And under pressure of some conscious cause?  
 The Lord of All, himself through all diffused,  
 Sustains, and is the life of all that lives.  
 Nature is but a name for an effect  
 Whose cause is God.”

But we are told that “NATURE is not infinite, and consequently, if it can be proved that God is present everywhere IN NATURE, this does not absolutely prove the universal Omnipresence of Deity, but simply that he uni-



versally exists in creation and providence." Well, this is all that is necessary for us to prove; for, if he really does exist in every part of the created universe at one and the same time, as he is an *Infinite Being*, his Omnipresence is a fair inference: he must, in the absolute and most unlimited sense of the word, be Omnipresent. But what creation may fail to demonstrate, revelation affirms; its teachings carry us beyond the limited facts of creation when it asserts, "*The heaven of heavens cannot contain thee.*"

### III. OMNISCIENCE IS A NATURAL PERFECTION OF DEITY.

By the Omniscience of God we are not, I presume, merely to understand that the Almighty possesses the capability of knowing all things, but that such is the boundless greatness of the Divine Mind, that he at once, throughout all time and eternity, sees and perfectly understands all things and all events, in every place; and consequently that he is perfectly qualified to direct all the affairs of the universe, without the least error, imperfection, or confusion. His understanding is infinite. Andrew Michael Ramsey, commonly called the Chevalier Ramsey, a distinguished polemic author of the seventeenth century, among other speculative opinions, asserted it to be a matter of choice with God, to think of finite ideas; and similar opinions, though variously modified and differently worded, have been occasionally adopted and propagated by more modern theologians and commentators. Such opinions may be thus expressed: The knowledge of God is infinite, but there is no more reason to conclude that his knowledge should be always exerted to the full extent of its capacity, than that his power should be employed to the extent of his omnipotence; the infiniteness of his knowledge is not thereby impugned.

Hence, an eminent commentator has defined *Omniscience* to be a *capacity* to know whatever is wise to be known. And, it would seem from the general scope and character of that author's reasoning, that he resorted to this theory in order to avoid the inference of personal election as a necessary deduction from the foreknowledge of God. "Omnipotence," says this author in effect, "is not the absolute doing of all that almighty power can do, but ability to do whatever is wise to be done; omnipotence therefore, in its exercises, is directed by wisdom; and, while God's power does not do what is unwise to be done, just so omniscience does not know what is unwise to be known." This mode of reasoning may appear very plausible at the first glance, but it will not bear a searching investigation. The comparison between omnipotence and omniscience will not hold good. The infinite power of the Most High must, according to the nature of things, be an infinite capacity, and not an infinite action, or a series of actions; but the knowledge of God, contrariwise, cannot be merely a capacity of acquiring infinite knowledge, or of extending that knowledge to an infinite extent, but the actually comprehending of, in his intellectual capacity, a perfect understanding and prescience of all things throughout endless duration. Hence, as Mr. Finney very judiciously observes, "The thing must be previously known, before wisdom could decide whether the knowledge of it would be wise or unwise." The hypothesis, therefore, must be chimerical, and the reasoning by which it is supported false. Besides, if it could be established, and shown to be in accordance with Scripture and sound reason, it would not meet the difficulty arising out of the question of the congruity of

the Divine prescience with the free actions of man; for some contingent actions, for which men have been accountable, *we are sure*, have been foreknown by God, because by his Spirit in the prophets they were foretold long before they came to pass. And if the free agency of man can in these cases be reconcilable with the prescience of Deity, there is certainly no greater difficulty in reconciling it with the freedom of the human mind in any other case which can possibly occur. We therefore conclude, that the omniscience of God is the absolute knowledge of all existences, events, and things throughout the universe, actual or possible. This doctrine, and these ideas of the Divine prescience, are distinctly and explicitly taught in the Word of God. "I have declared the former things from the beginning; and they went forth out of my mouth, and I shewed them; I did them suddenly, and they came to pass." Isaiah xlviii. 3. "Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that were not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." Isaiah xli. 10. "There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known . . . . what shall be in the latter days." Dan. ii. 28. "Times are not hidden from the Almighty." Job xxiv. 1. "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." Acts xv. 18. See also Heb. iv. 13.

#### IV. GOD IS IMMUTABLE.

By the Divine Immutability is simply meant the unchangeableness of God's nature. He is eternally the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever; without variableness or shadow of turning. That this is a natural perfection of the Divine Being is abundantly evident; for if his existence is

necessary, which is unquestionable, then it follows as a necessary consequence that he must be eternally the same, in both his natural and moral perfections. Mutation would be incompatible with his infinite and eternal nature. If any change were to take place in his attributes, that change must consist in a diminution, because there cannot be any accession to infinity; and if anything were taken from his nature it would annihilate his Godhead, or render him incapable of almighty actions, and consequently unfit him for supreme and universal government. Hence the notion of divine mutability, in relation to the natural and moral perfections of Deity, is palpably absurd and contradictory.

The unchangeableness of God is further demonstrated from the fact of his independent existence. The existence of the *Eternal* does not, and cannot depend upon any cause, consequently change in his nature is philosophically impossible; it would be an event or an effect without a cause. Mutation in created and imperfect beings arises from the conception of new ideas, or an accession of intellectual light, or at least this is the primary cause. New thoughts rise in the mind, which give existence to new desires, designs, and determinations; hence man is a growing, improving or degenerating subject. In reference to his views, feelings, desires, and determinations, he is ever changing. His very nature, and the circumstances in which he is placed, as a progressive being, necessarily subject him to a series of successive changes. In relation to God it is otherwise; as an infinite, all-wise Being, his knowledge admits of no accession. God brought all things, animate and inanimate, material and intellectual, into existence; or, according to the sublime language of the inspired Psalmist:

“ All were written in thy book, and what day they should be fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.” Therefore, nothing which takes place throughout all the changes of time, and an eternity of ceaseless improvement (to his creatures), can furnish him with one single new thought or idea. And, as no change can possibly take place in reference to his thoughts or ideas, nothing can occur in his desires, or in his determinations; for such changes are the result of some new views of the mind in which they exist; but no such changes are possible to him, “ who knew all things from the beginning.” Acts xv. 18.

The immutability of Jehovah is also confirmed and manifest from the unchanging regularity which the learned have discovered in the laws of the physical universe, especially in the revolutions of the heavenly bodies, the succession of seasons, and in vegetable and animal productions. Though endlessly diversified, there is a uniform perpetuation of every species of being. To every seed God has “ given its own body,” and if there are occasional deviations from this eternal law, they only prove the general regularity of the material system, or they would cease to attract attention.

The universal empire of nature, as far as human investigation has been able to explore, not only displays the all-comprehending and all-pervading power of God, but also unfolds the unchanging laws by which worlds, and systems of peopled orbs, are governed; and which from age to age are subject to the same laws, and fulfil the same purpose. Hence nature, in her immense aggregate, not only reveals the existence and primitive attributes of the great *I Am*, but shows that he is a Being of immutable

counsels, free from caprice, and liable to no control or deviation from his eternal designs. This doctrine receives further confirmation from the nature and character of God's moral government. The laws under which we are placed, though partially modified by the Saviour, are substantially the same as those prescribed to the earliest generations of our race. What sin was in the primitive ages of our world, *sin* is now; and what was morally good then, is the same now. We must admit that, even in a moral point of view, Christianity furnishes us with a clearer and more ample development of the purity and rectitude of God's moral laws, than any other system or revelation of any previous dispensation. God manifested his nature to man, not at once, but by a series of successive revelations. It is a remark worthy of our attention, that although the Patriarchal, the Mosaic, and the Christian dispensations have extended over six thousand years, and each gives a peculiar and distinct development of God's moral economy, the essential and fundamental principles of each moral precept are precisely the same, and the moral ends which each proposes are in perfect harmony. Their differences are merely circumstantial, varying according to the age of the world, the social and political condition of mankind, and the secret plans of Infinite Wisdom. But the identity of their spirit, influence, and character, most explicitly demonstrate their author to be an unchangeable Being of holiness, justice, truth, and mercy. Hence men of every age must view the moral character of God precisely in the same sense, and in the same light, as did the ancient Jews, or the more remote Antedeluvians, viz. as hating vice and loving virtue.

Before we conclude this subject, it will be proper to remark, that by the immutability of God, we are not to understand that his operations, and modes of moral government, admit of no change or alteration, or that the Divine Mind is incapable of moral inflection, or of different regards and affections towards the same individuals under different circumstances. God is said to create and destroy, he wounds and heals, he works and ceases to work, he loves and hates, &c.; but these various exercises of his mind, being all under the direction of the same infinite and immutable wisdom, holiness, goodness, and justice, are proofs of his unchangeable moral nature. It is frequently predicated of God in the Scriptures, that *he repented*, after he had threatened to punish; and that he forgave and showed mercy to those who humbled themselves under his punishment. With the obstinately guilty he is "*weary of forbearing*," and inflicts vengeance. Hence he hates the evildoer and loves the righteous. But that love does not continue under all circumstances, for if it did, God would be a changeable Being. "When the righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, *and* doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth," God, who cannot change, is angry with him, because of his wickedness. This change of affection is a necessary element in the divine immutability; for if he loved the righteous with the same affection when he turned away from his righteousness and committed iniquity, it would prove that God partook of the same frailty and unsteadfastness which are characteristic of weak and changeable humanity. I shall not attempt to discuss, or even to mention, the mass of speculative and dogmatic theology which metaphysicians

and theoretical divines have penned on this subject, as, in my judgment, it would have been more calculated to confuse and bewilder the reader than to furnish him with useful instruction.

V. REFLECTIONS ON THE PRECEDING REMARKS.

The views we have taken of the natural perfections of the Divine Being, in relation to his existence, his spirituality and unity, his sovereignty and providence, his almighty power and omnipresence, his omniscience and immutability, are calculated deeply to impress our minds,—

First, with his supreme and immeasurable *dignity* and *greatness*. “God is great, and greatly to be feared;” worthy of being loved, honoured, and obeyed by all his rational creatures. All the dignity of created beings, however exalted in rank and station, is but vanity when compared with the infinite majesty and boundless greatness of the Most High, whose “glory endureth for ever.” He eternally and immutably reigns in glorious majesty, and is therefore the object of ceaseless and supreme adoration. Hence, the whole intelligent universe is represented as being united in giving praise and glory to “Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.” “And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.” Rev. v. 13. In this glorious manifesto, universal homage,—comprehended in the terms heaven, earth, and hell,—is represented as being paid to God



and the Lamb : " To Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." Such homage and adoration

" Become the grandeur of a God."

Secondly. The natural attributes of the Divine Being qualify him for the government of a harmonious scheme of boundless goodness, and to carry on throughout endless duration a perfect system in a perfect manner, without the least fault or error. Nothing short of or inferior to these changeless perfections could qualify him for the government of universal empire. For, to accomplish this, every part of the vast universe of matter and mind must be under the absolute control of a power which is almighty and immutable, and of a Being who is everywhere present, supporting, guiding, instructing, blessing and saving.

Thirdly. Without this independent dignity and consistency of character in the divine nature, God's people could have no ground of reliance, and consequently could exercise no saving confidence in him as their Saviour in time of need. But amidst all the changes of time, and fluctuations of mortal affairs—amidst all the trials of life, and unfaithfulness of false friends, however injured, deceived, or persecuted—the man who humbly trusts in his God, will find a refuge in time of need. This consideration will ever comfort and support the soul amidst all the ills of life. In the fiery furnace of affliction, and amidst all the pangs, and storms, and wreck of desolving nature, " God is ever the same, and his faithfulness endureth throughout all generations." When darkness intercepts the skies, when sorrow's waves around him roll, " when

deep calleth unto deep," when the night of death approacheth, and the grave, with all its solemnities appears, when eternity with all its sublime realities bursts upon the vision of the soul, even then the child of God can serenely rest upon the immutable goodness and infinite power of him in whom he steadfastly believes. /

## VII. ON GOD'S MORAL ATTRIBUTES.

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*The Moral Nature of God is Love.* Moral agency is implied in moral attributes. God is infinitely and eternally good. He takes pleasure in benevolence. God has made his creatures capable of enjoyment. Natural theology manifests Divine benevolence. The inconveniences of our present residence considered in relation to God's benevolence. Dr. Paley's observations. The goodness of God manifested in the supplies of nature. The goodness of God manifested in redemption; and in the conversion of individual sinners. *The Justice of God.* God is just. What is meant by the justice of God.. Legislative justice. Judicial justice *God is True and Faithful.* In what sense faithfulness may be considered a distinct attribute of Deity. God's faithfulness is calculated to inspire his creatures with confidence. The abomination of falsehood. *God is Merciful.* The mercy of God defined; not a passion but an attribute of the Divine nature. The mercy of God developed in nature. The mercy of God mysteriously manifested sometimes in providence. The mercy of God manifested in the forgiveness of sin. This doctrine is revealed in the Bible only. The mercy of God ought to teach us to detest cruelty. *The Knowledge and Wisdom of God.* Knowledge and wisdom not the same, but connected. Quotations from various authors. Wisdom and knowledge ascribed to God in the Bible. God is *infinitely* wise. Wisdom of God manifested in his works; especially so when examined with the aid of optical instruments. Wisdom of God manifested in the glorious scheme of human redemption. *Holiness* is a *perfection of the Divine nature.* What is meant by holiness. This attribute ascribed to God in Scripture. Quotation from Maimonides on the purity of the Mosaic precepts. The manner in which God manifested himself to the high priests under the Old Testament dispensation. God's holiness manifested in Christ, and in the work of the atonement. *The Happiness of God.* General reflections.

WE have before shewn that the natural attributes of God are such as belong to the nature of his being. The moral attributes of God are such dispositions and permanent states of mind as are essential to his divine perfection, but

which cannot, for certain reasons, be regarded as constitutional and natural. A learned theologian says, "The whole moral character of God is good;" "the Lord is good;" "God is love." Goodness and benevolence may therefore be regarded, in a certain sense, as comprehending all the moral perfections of the divine nature, or according to Mr. Finney's definition, "God's entire character, and every moral exercise of his infinite mind, is only some modification of his benevolence, and that when we speak of benevolence as an attribute, we do it merely for convenience sake, and for the purpose of directing the mind particularly to that expression of it that consists in willing good to its objects."

That we may more clearly and fully understand what is implied in the exercise of moral attributes, it is necessary to bear in mind that *moral agency* is pre-supposed or implied in it, or in other words, God must possess such qualities and properties of mind as constitute him a *moral agent*; and that the Almighty does possess such faculties as constitute him capable of moral agency, is plainly implied in the fact, that in connection with intelligence he has a will influenced by the highest considerations of truth and righteousness. In prosecuting our inquiries and investigations of God's moral character and perfections, let us—

I. Consider his *goodness* or *benevolence*. For goodness, when considered as a distinct attribute of Jehovah, signifies benevolence, or an inward principle of goodwill as expressed in benevolent actions. Hence, the Psalmist says: "Thou art good and doest good. O praise the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever. He is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works," &c.

He is, says St. James, "The Father of lights, from whom cometh every good and every perfect gift." Now this view of the divine character comprehends some important peculiarities, which, though often overlooked, give to the revelation of God's moral nature a peculiar glory. Let us consider—

1. That God is essentially, perfectly, infinitely, immutably, and eternally good in himself. Goodness is not an occasional affection of his mind, but an essential property of his *moral nature*. "God is love," which imports an idea, that he is good both in principle and in action; and as his nature is all-perfect and infinite, he must be eternally the same—a never-failing source of all-sufficiency and uncompounded goodness. As the great source of natural light, which is an emblem of its Creator, sheds his rays upon surrounding worlds, and sends abroad immense oceans of light through every part of the solar system, without suffering the least diminution of splendour; so God, the great source of intellectual light and glory, imparts without being exhausted. He is ever giving, yet has infinitely more to give. Millions of blessings are ever flowing from this "spring of all our joys," yet the store is not in the least diminished.

2. Another delightful consideration is, that he takes pleasure in the exercise of benevolence. "He delighteth in mercy." In order to obtain a gift from some men who have it in their power to bestow, we have almost to wring it out of them by irresistible arguments and the most sympathetic imploration; but God gives *liberally*. He does not stintedly dispense his favours, but gives freely and abundantly. He is rich to all that call upon him, "ex-

ceeding abundantly, above all we can either ask or think." And, taking this view of the subject, what encouragement have we to pray to God, and what strong grounds of absolute trust in him.

3. Another strong argument in favour of the doctrine under consideration is, that nothing which is capable of happiness comes immediately from his creating hand without being placed in circumstances of positive felicity. When God made the world, it was very good; when he made man, he made him wise and happy, and gave him power to remain in that holy, wise, and happy condition; and whatever God creates, or does, is wise and good. For, "he is too wise to err, and too good to be unkind." Though natural and moral evil are introduced into our world, God, in his goodness, is represented as establishing an order of perfectly sufficient means to remedy or counteract these evils. Hence we read: "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help." "Where sin hath abounded, grace hath much more abounded." Sin abounded unto death, but grace reigns and triumphs. We may have eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy One of Israel is our *Redeemer* and *Saviour*; and the means by which he justifies the assumption of these titles, displays his goodness with such peculiar eminence that they are called,—"The riches of his glory." Such are the views of the divine goodness as unfolded in the Scriptures; and natural theology, when considered in connection with the light of revelation, teaches the same important truths.

II. And with regard to the manifestations of divine benevolence, it is universally displayed throughout the kingdom of nature, as well as in the dispensations of grace

and mercy. No attribute of the Divine Being is more clearly developed and more extensively diversified in its operations and manifestations than his goodness or benevolence. It is abundantly displayed in the production and arrangement of the material universe. Wherever we turn our eyes in the natural world, we not only recognise infinite strength and equal skill, but unmingled goodness. A ceaseless flame of uncompounded goodwill appears in all the scenes and circumstances of terrestrial existence. The whole universe seems to be planned and arranged on the principles of benevolence. Hills, valleys, seas, rivers, lofty mountains and deep dells, with a thousand peculiarities in nature, have been proved to be conducive to the happiness of man, if not essential to his mortal existence.

The fact alleged that the globe, as the residence of man, has its inconveniences, may indeed be generally admitted, such as its variable and often pernicious climates, its earthquakes, volcanos, tempests and inundations, sandy deserts and snowy regions, its sterility in some places, and its productiveness of noxious reptiles and destructive animals in other parts, and other evils and inconveniences too numerous to mention. But some of these natural evils and sources of annoyance are the result of man's rebellion, and others are the chastisements of a merciful Father, and are designed to be productive of moral good. For, as the learned Dr. Paley observes in his *Dissertation on Natural Theology*, "In a vast plurality of instances in which contrivance is perceived, the design of the contrivance is beneficial."

III. The goodness of God is also strikingly displayed in the rich supplies of nature. In the luxurious productions of the vegetable and animal universe, whose produce is

designed for the use and happiness of man. Many eminent philosophers have talked fluently and written eloquently and beautifully on the richness and plenitude of nature's productions, without ever leading the minds of their students, *religiously*, to nature's God. But we should bear in mind, that it is the great benevolent Author of all things who puts life, fertility, and the sources of plenty, into our supplying world—who gives vitality and being to all the diversified inhabitants which breathe and move on our teraqueous planet. On this pleasing theme the Psalmist was contemplating when he exclaimed: "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name." Psalm ciii. 1. And again: "He sendeth his springs into the valleys, which run among the hills. They give drink to every beast of the field. He causeth the grass to grow for cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth; and wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart." Psalm civ. 10, 11, 14, 15. God might turn our fruitful fields into barrenness, dry up our fountains of water, and change our fertile pastures into barren deserts; but he does not deal with us according to our sins, nor reward us according to our iniquities; but in much longsuffering he bears with our folly and wickedness, which is a standing proof of his benevolence.

In providence also his benevolence is unfolded, but the richness of his goodness is most gloriously manifested in the redemption of the world by Jesus Christ, who is the gift of God's love.

"Of twice ten thousand gifts divine,  
No gift like this could ever shine."



Zechariah, in order to waken up the admiration and delight of the daughters of Zion, when predicting the coming of the Saviour, says: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy King cometh unto thee." Why must they rejoice? "Because he is *just*, and having salvation." And the justice of God, as well as his power, mercy, and benevolence, is ever a source of holy joy to the pure in heart.

### III. GOD IS TRUE AND FAITHFUL.

On this delightful subject we are furnished with ample proof in the inspired volume, as well as in the conduct of the Almighty towards mankind in all ages of the world. Faithfulness, under certain qualified considerations, may be regarded as a distinct attribute of the divine nature, though some theologians contend that it is only a part of his holiness. Taking this peculiar view of the subject, the same may be said in reference to some other attributes, as none of them, properly speaking, are distinct and independent, but must be regarded as homogeneous, and forming the most glorious and majestic character, the most pure and perfect Being in the universe, before whose infinite perfections all created intelligences ought to worship and adore.

We proceed to consider that the *Faithfulness* of God, as spoken of in many places in Scripture, is a part of his *moral nature*, or an essential characteristic of the great Eternal Mind. It is there recorded that "God is true," that "he is the God of truth," that "His words are true," that "His counsels are faithfulness and truth;" "The words that he shall speak shall come to pass; what he hath said he will perform; for he is the faithful God, who keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his

commandments;" that "all his promises are yea and amen;" "He keepeth truth for ever;" "He remembereth the word which he hath commanded to a thousand generations." "Thy word, O Lord, is truth from the beginning; and thy truth endureth for ever." "Thy word is settled in heaven; and thy faithfulness is unto all generations." "Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away." "His covenant will he not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of his lips." For "God is not a man that he should lie, neither the son of man that he should repent." "Let God be true, and every man a liar." "For it is impossible for God to lie." Similar declarations and affirmations relative to the divine veracity, are to be found in every part of the Old and New Testaments. And the conduct of the Almighty in all ages has been consistent with his revealed Word. Hence, from the commencement of time down to the present period of the world's history, fresh proofs of the divine faithfulness have been constantly occurring, which prove, with an overwhelming weight of evidence, that amidst all the changes of time and fluctuations of moral affairs, amidst the rise and fall of kingdoms, the overthrow of empires, all the revolutions in nations, and the alterations in the physical and intellectual universe, God is the same immutable Being, and that his faithfulness endureth to all generations. He is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

The essential faithfulness and veracity of God might be fairly and properly argued from the immutability of his holiness, benevolence, justice, and happiness, because an unfaithful being could not possess any of these perfections; he therefore must be a God of unimpeachable veracity and

eternal truth. Without this he would be unqualified for the government of his rational creatures, because it is on his faithfulness they safely and rationally confide. Duplicity and falsehood in a ruler unfit him for a proper discharge of the duties involved in his high vocation, and is regarded by the virtuous with detestation and horror. But, as God is infinitely holy, just, and good, he is full of truth and righteousness, and is therefore entitled to the unshaken confidence of all his creatures, and worthy to be adored and loved by all intelligent beings. This view of the divine character ought to inspire us with a love for truth and a hatred to falsehood. Six things the Lord hates, yea, seven are an abomination unto him; and a lying tongue is one of the abominable things mentioned in that detestable catalogue. Deceitful men of every class—I mean such as to lie, slander, defraud, cheat, seduce, flatter, sophisticate and hypocritically deceive—are as dangerous to society as they are detestable to every upright mind.

Perhaps no kind of immoral conduct is more palpably opposed to God, or is more offensive in his sight, than falsehood and unfaithfulness. “Falsehood,” says an eminent divine, “in every form and in every degree, from the humble pretence to the palpable lie, is absolutely opposed to God, nor is any immoral conduct adopted against clearer evidence and more absolute conviction. Truth is a thing perfectly definite: we all know when we speak it, and also when we utter falsehood. It is therefore a sin against noonday light, and is always committed in the sunshine.” How then must that Being who is invested with the glorious attribute of *truth*,—perfect, eternal, unchanging truth—regard the base and vile character who is guilty of

falsehood?—conduct which is so absolutely and directly opposed to his own virtuous nature, and so hostile to the security and happiness of his intelligent creatures. Hence, God's determination to inflict signal vengeance on lying and deceitful men, is announced in a variety of awful forms. Let untruthful men tremble while they read these burning threats. None shall enter into heaven who either loveth or maketh a lie. God hath also emphatically declared, that "All liars shall have their portion in the lake of fire and brimstone, which is the second death." But, notwithstanding these awful declarations, how many unscrupulously resort to the grossest falsehood, when they cannot secure their designs by truth? And there are many to whom lying has become so habitual that they indulge in the practice even in the absence of difficulty or special temptation. From such a state of mind may God save the reader, and from such detestable and soul-destroying habits may the grace of God reclaim the false man, ere he finds his portion with the miserable victims of falsehood in the burning lake of hell, "where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched."

#### IV. GOD IS MERCIFUL.

There is not much disagreement among theologians with regard to what mercy is, considered either abstractedly or in its exercise and operations. It is a disposition of compassion, tenderness, and pity, willingness to spare and save, clemency, mildness, unwillingness to punish the guilty, compassion exercised towards an offender in distress, and may be distinguished from mere goodness by its combination with justice. Because, as an able

and discriminating author very properly observes, "Justice is as much an attribute of goodness as mercy is." A judge, for instance, may be good and righteous when he pronounces the full sentence of the law upon a criminal; but in this there is no mercy. To show mercy is to commiserate and pardon the guilty, and thereby set aside the execution of punishment which is legally demanded by the enforcement of inexorable justice. And that God is merciful in this sense is abundantly evident, and that it is essential to his nature and forms a part of his moral character, is equally as plain from his own express declaration. When the Lord passed by before Moses, in the top of the holy mount, he proclaimed his name, "The Lord, the Lord God, *merciful* and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping *mercy* for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin." Whatever else may be implied in the great and eternal name of the Most High, *Jehovah*, it is evident that it clearly and most emphatically sets forth his infinite mercy and boundless compassion, "Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin." And the Psalmist says, "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy." Ps. ciii. 8. After David had brought upon himself the anger of God by numbering the people, the prophet Gad was sent to reprove him for his folly and ambition, and to offer him, in behalf of God, "three things." He said unto David, "Choose thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee." "Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee? or that there be three days' pestilence in thy land?" And David said unto

Gad, "I am in a great strait; let us fall now into the hand of the Lord; *for his mercies are great.*"

Mercy, considered in relation to the Divine Being, must not be regarded as a passion or affection of the mind, as it is in men, but an essential attribute of his nature, under the control of his sovereign will, and in its operations guided by infinite wisdom and pure benevolence. The mercy of God is incomprehensibly great, inasmuch as it pardons offences committed against an infinitely holy Being, and bestows on the pardoned infinite good. It is also immutable, "I am the Lord," saith the Holy One of Israel; "I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." The mercy of God will be celebrated for ever in the future state: "It is from everlasting to everlasting." It has been further distinguished into *preserving* mercy, *comforting* mercy, *relieving* mercy, *pardoning* mercy, and *universal* mercy. But these manifestations of God's grace are displays of the same attribute operating in different ways, in relation to different individuals, as their circumstances and cases require. It has been said that the mercy of God is so universally displayed, that if we were never to look into the Bible, we might be furnished with abundant evidence, illustrative of the mercy of God, by reading and studying the book of nature, provided we studied under the tuition of sound reason; and to this sentiment I can unhesitatingly subscribe; but still it must be confessed that there are some things in the course of nature, and in the order of providence, from which reason *alone* cannot adduce any proof of the divine mercy.

For instance, when a virtuous man is the subject of long and painful affliction, disappointment, and multifarious

trials, so that he is a stranger to health and prosperity, what can mere unassisted reason say to this? Alas! it is confounded without the aid of revelation. On the other hand, a wicked man is exempt from suffering, and enjoys all the temporal good his soul can wish. At this arrangement of things, mere human reason is also confounded. The extolled Socrates, one of the most refined moral philosophers of the heathen world, said that he doubted whether it were possible for God to forgive sin; and, were it not for the light of revelation, we should be harassed with the same doubts and fears, and, notwithstanding our sincere repentance, might be tormented with the idea, that after death justice will assert its claims with unabating rigour. But from the Bible we learn, that "if we confess and forsake our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." President Dwight has penned some very plain and conclusive remarks on the subject now under consideration, which are in substance as follow: "The hope of future happiness evidently depends on the important question, whether God will forgive sin and accept the sinner? This question is of infinite importance to every man, and needs in the highest degree to be satisfactorily answered. The doctrine that God is merciful, is, I think, in the view of reason, sufficiently probable to command our faith. But, that it is or can be proper for God to forgive sin in any case, reason is utterly unable to evince." It is one thing simply to discern that God is merciful, and another to be fully satisfied as to whether that mercy can be so far extended, in harmony with divine justice, as to forgive the sinner. If reason can know that God will forgive sin and save the

rebellious, such knowledge must be derived either from the nature of this attribute, or from the fact that he has, in some *one instance* at least, forgiven sin, or otherwise it must be inferred from some argument founded upon analogy.

1. From the nature of the divine mercy we could not certainly conclude that God will forgive the sins of mankind. Two considerations place this beyond all doubt. One is the extent of the divine kingdom and all its immense and eternal concerns, which, of course, demand far other measures than such as we are able to comprehend or devise; another is, that God in fact does innumerable things utterly contrary to all that we should expect, and completely removed beyond the limits of our understanding. These furnish the most ample proofs that he will do innumerable things equally contrary to our expectation and decision; and of course we cannot confidently calculate what he will do.

2. Apart from revelation, we have no instance recorded in which God forgave sin; neither is there any declaration in nature that he will forgive the sins of man. We are pardoned through faith in the blood of Christ, and in consideration of the infinite merit of his vicarious death; and these are matters of divine revelation.

3. We cannot come to any safe conclusion from analogy. The only ground of hope furnished by his providence is the patience with which he endures, and the blessings which he bestows upon us notwithstanding our provocations; but this conduct seems to be connected, of necessity, with a state of trial, and furnishes no solid argument of future and favourable rewards. The gloomy and distress-



ing circumstances which attend our removal from this world by death, exhibit, on the contrary, awful premonitions of an unhappy allotment to us beyond the grave. We therefore conclude, that sinful man, without revelation, is left to the sentence of mere justice and rigid law; and by them he is of course condemned. He is in fact a sinner, and must therefore be pronounced guilty on the day of trial. In this situation reason finds and leaves him; and to this situation infidelity and mere "*rationalism*" conducts him again. Without the atonement and mediation of Christ, there is no escape from the sentence of the divine law; and revelation itself furnishes no other way in which mercy can be extended to sinning man.

According to the most comfortable and refined scheme of infidelity, you must go to the judgment-seat on the footing of your own righteousness, and be tried by your own obedience. If you have faithfully obeyed God, you will be acquitted; if not, you must be condemned. If, then, justification, acceptance, and future happiness, if deliverance from wrath to come and endless damnation be necessary to you, the mediation of Christ, and the revelation which alone brings this mediation to your knowledge, or furnishes you with the hope of sharing in its blessings, are equally necessary. Hence, of all the mercies of God, none are so great as pardoning mercy through Christ; and in this view it was contemplated by the Apostle in his letter to the Ephesians: "*You hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins; but God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ: that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding

riches of his grace in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus." The mercy of God ought to teach us to detest cruelty, and delight in the exercise of mercy and kindness towards all mankind. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." As God hath in mercy forgiven us who never merited a single favour at his hands, let us be kind and affectionate, in mercy forgiving one another.

V. GOD POSSESSES ALL KNOWLEDGE AND INFINITE WISDOM.

In classing these two grand attributes of the divine nature together, the reader must not suppose that I have confounded the one with the other, or that in all cases wisdom is the result of knowledge. It is possible, for instance, for a man to know a great deal, and yet act very foolishly: in fact, that is far from being an uncommon case. "Every intelligent man is not a wise man," says one of our best authors.

Notwithstanding this, knowledge is essential to wisdom. A man who is ignorant, or destitute of knowledge, can never be said to be wise, only in a very limited sense. If a man of scanty information prudently reduces to practice the little he knows, so far he may be considered as acting the part of a wise man, but, in the general and popular acceptance of the word, he is not a man of wisdom.

Wisdom, considered as an attribute of the Divine Mind, is that right and perfectly good use everywhere displayed by the Almighty, in the exercise of his infinite knowledge, in promoting the good and happiness of his creatures and the everlasting glory of himself. This development of his glorious nature is seen in the stupendous works of creation, in the dispensations of his providence, in the incomparably great work of human redemption, in his sovereign and moral

government of the universe, in the preservation of his Church and the protection of his people in all ages of the world, in the sublime and beneficial doctrines he teaches, and in the practical duties which he inculcates. (See Charnock's Works, vol. 1; Saurin's Sermons, vol. 1; Gill's Body of Divinity; Ray's Wisdom of God, and Paley's Natural Theology). Such wisdom necessarily comprehends the perfection of universal truth, which, according to Mr. Locke, is "infinite knowledge." The knowledge of God is his *Omniscience*, viz. that perfection by which he knows all things, not by successive discoveries, but by his own infinite intuition. His perfect and infinite knowledge exists independently and perfectly: it is peculiar to himself: it is naturally impossible for him to communicate it to any other person either on earth or in heaven.

These perfections of his wisdom and knowledge are frequently ascribed to him in the inspired volume. His understanding is infinite: "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good. He declareth former things, and sheweth things that shall be hereafter; he declareth the end from the beginning, and from ancient times, the things that are not yet done." Nothing is hid from the Almighty: he knoweth even the hearts of all men, and understandeth all the imaginations of their thoughts. "He understandeth our thoughts afar off. The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens; by his know-

ledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew. He hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion. O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all." In this way, and in such like terms, the wisdom and knowledge of God are spoken of in Scripture, which amounts to conclusive evidence of his infinite wisdom. The same perfections of his divine nature are also manifest in his works. The operations of his hands, as well as the words of his mouth, shew that he is a Being who knoweth all things, and doeth all things for the best. All the productions of nature, from objects of inconceivable magnitude, to the most minute and simple elements in creation, prove the existence of a Being of infinite skill. The learned Dr Watts, in his article on "Infinite Divisibility," (according to the best of my recollection,) observes: "In the works of God there are objects and operations *infinitely great*, and on the other hand there are created particles *infinitely small*." And in these immeasurable extremes the wisdom of God is strikingly unfolded. Mr. Locke on the same subject expresses himself in a similar manner.

What amazing contrivance and profound skill are displayed in the sublime arrangement of the planetary and sidereal universe! Look, in the first place, at its aggregated magnitude, at its stupendous greatness. In this boundless field of Jehovah's glory are millions of suns, surrounded by a countless multitude of revolving planets with their brilliant appendages, comprehending a mass of matter which cannot be computed by any human mind, and which it is presumable would baffle the mathematical

skill of the highest archangel in heaven. And yet, notwithstanding the magnitude, distances, and number of these amazing bodies, they are so minutely regulated and governed by laws so exact and finely adjusted, that the whole machinery moves on from age to age in everlasting harmony and unbroken order, so that men who understand the laws of nature and the movements and revolutions of the heavenly bodies, can foretell for a thousand years to come what peculiar phenomena will take place, and the least deviation would be sufficient to fill them with surprise and astonishment. God's works are great and marvellous, and in wisdom he has founded them all. Rev. xv. 3.

God's wisdom is seen in the properties and virtues of herbs, in the peculiar formation and uses of minerals, in the organization of animals and their adaptation to the peculiar uses and service for which they were destined, in the beautiful and majestic structure of the human body, and in the dignity and power of the human intellect, which qualifies man for the duties connected with the lofty position allotted to him by his Maker on this terrestrial globe. In fact, all created beings, from the large celestial orb suspended upon nothing, and with inconceivable velocity moving through space, to the smallest atom invisible with the most powerful optical instrument, with their nature, use, and the laws by which they are governed, show forth in a most interesting manner the perfect wisdom of the great Creator of all things.

If with the aid of optical instruments we look into the otherwise unseen world, we discover ten thousand wonderful phenomena illustrative of the being and wisdom

of God—works which, in point of beauty and the symmetrical arrangements of their delicate parts, infinitely transcend the most complete and finished works of art. Some time ago I examined, with the aid of a powerful microscope, some of the finest specimens of human production which I ever saw ; but, contrasted with the productions of nature, or the works of God, they appeared only like the coarse, rude, and unfinished efforts of the most barbarous and uncultivated mind, or the imperfect imitations of children. There are millions of natural existences, both in the animate and inanimate worlds, unseen and consequently unnoticed by mortal eye, which, when inspected with the aid of optical instruments, unfold in the most interesting manner the transcendent wisdom of the Maker and Governor of all things. In Kitto's Pictorial Bible (Job xxxviii.) we are furnished with some beautiful representations of the crystals of which the flakes of snow are formed ; and Captain Scoresby, who gave much attention to this and other arctic phenomena, has figured ninety-six varieties of these crystals, on which he observes : “ The extreme beauty and endless variety of the microscopic objects perceived in the animal and vegetable kingdoms are perhaps fully equalled, if not surpassed in both particulars of beauty and variety, by the crystals of snow ;” and these things afford ample evidence of the wisdom and power of God. When God spoke to Job out of the whirlwind, in order to convince him of his ignorance and imbecility, he referred him to the works of nature, and declares himself to be the Creator and Governor of the world, and calls the attention of Job to these things as proclaiming the greatness of his power and wisdom. (Job xxxviii.)

“ Infinite strength and equal skill  
Shine through thy works abroad ;  
Our souls with vast amazement fill,  
And speak the builder God.”

The laws by which all these beings are preserved and sustained, the time allotted to them as the term of their transitory existence, and the causes of their mortality or cessation of existence, are also displays of the divine wisdom. The wisdom of God is also sublimely developed in the grand and glorious scheme of human redemption by Jesus Christ. This stupendous work was not only a display of omnipotence and boundless benevolence, but of perfect wisdom. The highest and most admirable kind of wisdom is to devise and execute means in order to the accomplishment of the most benevolent ends, and to execute those designs in a manner consistent with the demands of justice and the claims of truth. If these ideas on the nature and character of wisdom are correct, then no work or operation of the Eternal Mind within human knowledge or comprehension affords such a pleasing and astonishing manifestation of the wisdom of God as the great and glorious work of redemption by Jesus Christ: the object of which was to restore degenerate man from the ruins of the fall, to save his soul from hell, and to elevate him to companionship with the glorified in heaven.

The greatness of this wisdom will appear more palpably if we consider the nature and character of man's original transgression and apostacy, the position in which his revolt against God has placed him, the immaculate holiness and unsullied justice of the Divine character, and the utter impossibility of God forgiving the sins of man without the

intervention of a mediator of perfect holiness and spotless purity. On these important themes we cannot at present enlarge; but every intelligent and reflecting mind will see their moral bearing on the subject now under consideration. God in his mercy resolved to forgive the sinner; but how is this to be done, consistent with truth and inflexible justice? Neither human nor angelic wisdom can satisfactorily answer this question. But God, who is infinite in wisdom, in the richness of his mercy and plentitude of his grace, devised a plan that his banished ones might not be for ever expelled. In the glorious scheme of redemption all the attributes of Deity shine forth in their unsullied splendour. Christ is said to be "the wisdom of God," because in him and in his glorious deeds the wisdom of God is most sublimely revealed; and, as God is perfectly wise himself, he must admire this moral excellency in his intelligent and rational creatures. To live in wilful ignorance and folly is a crime. It is a shameful waste of our talents, and a criminal mis-application of our precious time. "Get wisdom, and with all thy getting get understanding," is a Divine command. And in my opinion this command applies not only to spiritual wisdom, or religion, but also to useful knowledge generally, and renders obligatory the application of it to useful and benevolent purposes. God never designed man, whom he hath endowed with such important mental faculties and intellectual capabilities, to pass through the world like a mere cipher, and to leave not a trace behind to perpetuate his memory. Nothing is so calculated to constitute a man a good and useful member of society as the attainment of knowledge, and the reducing of it to practice so as to benefit his fellow-creatures. We are not to suppose that all men



are to become learned in languages, history, literature, arts, sciences, and in the various branches of natural and moral philosophy: but all men are required to make a proper use of their opportunities and intellectual capabilities, and thereby to increase in wisdom and knowledge day by day. The human mind is formed for endless pleasure and unceasing improvement, not merely by a natural growth and enlargement of its intellectual capacities, but by diligent use of those means designed to facilitate our advancement in knowledge, and by making a proper and benevolent use of the information we thereby acquire. Such intellectual industry not only results in personal satisfaction and happiness, but is beneficial to our fellow-men, and redounds to the glory of God; it is therefore well-pleasing in his sight.

VI. HOLINESS IS A MORAL PERFECTION OF THE DIVINE CHARACTER.

By the holiness of God we are to understand the purity and rectitude of his nature—that benevolent disposition of God’s moral character which uniformly leads him to do that which is perfectly right, according to the principles of justice, mercy, and wisdom. And this perfection of the divine Being, like every other, is infinite; that is to say, it can never be improved, and as God is immutable it can never be diminished.

On the subject of God’s holiness, Mr Finney remarks: “Holiness in man expresses the whole of moral excellence; so in God it may express the whole of *his* moral excellence, and is properly styled an attribute only in the largest sense of that term, or in the same sense in which benevolence may be styled an attribute of God.” His moral attributes, when combined, are an ineffable blaze of holiness, so bril-

liant and overpowering in light and splendour, that the most exalted and holiest beings in the universe behold it with veiled faces. When Isaiah, *in a vision*, “saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up,” he says: “Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings: with twain *he covered his face*,—and one cried unto another, and said, HOLY, HOLY, HOLY, is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.” Hence, such is the purity and lustre of that holiness which adorns the Divine Majesty, that even the most intelligent and most holy of all his creatures approach him (or the manifestation of his presence) with covered faces. On this awfully glorious theme our poet was meditating when he penned the following lines:—

“Thee, while the first archangel sings,  
He hides his face behind his wings.”

In the sacred Scriptures holiness is frequently ascribed to God. The Lord our God is holy. God is pure. Holy and Reverend is his name. The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. Thou, O Lord, art holy. There is none holy as the Lord. Who is like unto thee, glorious in holiness. Such is his transcendent purity, that it is said, “The heavens are not clean in his sight.” Hence, nothing which he has created is as holy as himself. (See Isaiah xliii. 15; Proverbs xxx. 5; Psalm cxlv. 17; and Rev. xv. 4.)

God’s moral law, which is an expression of his will and mind concerning human actions, and which to the Christian is the foundation of moral obligation, is highly illustrative of his holiness; and especially when viewed in the light and in the sense as unfolded by the Saviour with

regard to its spiritual designs and import. Maimonides, one of the most learned and intelligent Jewish commentators, observes, that "Every precept of the law, whether affirmative or negative, is intended, first, to prevent the exercise of violence and encourage those virtuous habits which are necessary to the existence and preservation of political society; and then, to inculcate just notions of those things which are to be believed, especially such as are useful in the prevention of violence and the promotion of virtue." The same author also remarks, in reference to the ceremonial laws, "God, in his infinite wisdom, gave us laws calculated to banish imaginary schemes of pleasure, to divert our thoughts from them, and to prevent *everything* tending to unlawful gratifications : such is the principal intent of our laws."

Many of the rites and laws instituted by God for the benefit and sanctity of the Jewish people, though symbolic and typical, were expressions of the Divine holiness, and were designed to establish the principles and practices of purity among his chosen people.

The manner in which he manifested himself to the High Priest, under the Old Testament dispensation, was a significant expression of his *peculiar holiness*. God commanded Moses to make an ark of pure gold, to decorate it with cherubim stretching forth their wings on high and covering the mercy-seat with their wings; and from between the cherubim over the mercy-seat the Most High revealed himself to the officiating High Priest. Every particular connected with this Divine manifestation was characteristic of the holiness and purity of God. The priest also, who approached the mercy-seat, and who was the

representative of the Holy One, had "*Holiness to the Lord*" engraven on a plate of pure gold, which he continually wore on his forehead, that he might be accepted before God; intimating thereby that God was a perfectly holy Being.

God's holiness is manifested in Christ, and in the work of the atonement. Channing, though a unitarian, in his sublime description of the divine character of the Saviour, makes some beautiful remarks illustrative of his supreme *holiness* and *spotless purity*. Though he fails to recognise in Christ the perfections of his Godhead, he nevertheless holds him forth as the "Holy One"—"The Lord's Anointed"—God's representative, and the world's Saviour—the most pure and the most benevolent being that ever existed upon earth. These are substantially the views entertained by one who did not believe in his supreme Divinity. But we go further than this. We believe Christ to be God with us; i.e. God in man; or, to speak more correctly, God and man united in one person. In this sublime and glorious character there is a development of infinite power and holiness. Purity of thought, word, and action characterised every manifestation of his nature, and furnishes our minds with the most exalted and refined ideas of the perfect holiness of the Divine Being. He passed through this corrupt and polluted world, in a comparatively benighted age, amongst his avowed enemies, exposed to insult and every kind of temptation, "yet without sin"—untarnished by human guilt, without a single stain or the shadow of a spot on his moral character. His enemies accused him—to whom Pilate answered, "I have examined him, and can find *no fault* in him." He stood before that

tribunal, "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." But it is not merely in his moral character that we discover such a manifestation of the Divine holiness, but also in the work of redemption. If God had forgiven sin without a sacrifice having being offered on behalf of sinners, if my views are correct he could not have been a perfectly holy Being. Infinite mercy, considered in itself, might have led him to adopt such a measure; but infinite justice, which is a part of his holiness, forms an invincible barrier to pardon without satisfaction. The price of redemption demanded by the claims of justice must be paid, either by the sinner himself or by some one who shall undertake the sinner's cause. Now the plain Scripture fact is, "Christ died for our sins;" "tasted death for every man." Christ, the just, suffered for us the unjust. He "knew no sin, but was made sin (or a sin-offering) for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." And in this work of reconciliation through Christ, the holiness of God is most graciously manifested. In Christ justice and mercy meet together, and are seen in "their divinest forms." Hence, in the atonement by Christ, there is the most glorious display of the Divine holiness.

#### VII. GOD IS INFINITELY AND ETERNALLY HAPPY.

The happiness of God is a subject not generally discussed by theologians, and by many it is totally unnoticed as superfluous. I suppose they judge that it is so palpably evident that no argument is required to prove it or to make it manifest. Admitting this to be the case, a few reflections on this delightful theme may not be unprofit-

able or out of place. An independent, all-perfect Being, cannot be otherwise than essentially happy in himself and in all his operations. This idea of the Great Eternal is expressed by St. Paul, where he describes him as “*The blessed and only Potentate, the Kings of kings, and Lord of lords ;—dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto.*” Tim. vii. 15, 16. David also declares that “*In his presence is fulness of joy, and at his right hand there are pleasures for ever more.*” As uninterrupted and eternal happiness exists in his presence, and as he is the fountain of this happiness, we cannot do otherwise than conclude that he must be perfectly happy in himself. And this happiness, we must distinctly bear in mind, is not derivable, neither does it depend upon the conduct of any of his creatures. It is that unalterable state of mind which is comprehended in his infinite perfections.

He is almighty, all-wise, and infinitely benevolent, and therefore must be consummately happy. Though men and devils insult him and blaspheme his holy name, they cannot marr his happiness, lessen his enjoyment, or disturb the eternal tranquility of his mind. The happiness of man, and perhaps of all created intelligences, depends on two things, viz. the state of mind and the circumstances in which he is placed ; and partly on other causes, such as the association of ideas, mental discipline, a manifestation of the Divine favour, &c. We find ample confirmation of the correctness of these ideas in the history of mankind, especially in connection with religious experience ; hence in many cases, sincere Christians have been inexpressibly happy amid the greatest and most complicated earthly sufferings.

Now, what affections or feelings may exist in the mind

of God, is not for us to determine ; or whether these feelings are eternally the same, we cannot with safety affirm ; but this we may venture to assert, that nothing occurs, either in himself or in relation to himself, which is capable of making him unhappy. For if we suppose the possibility of his being unhappy, in the least degree or for the shortest period, we must of necessity conclude that he is either a changeable Being, or eternally unhappy, or both ; and therefore we see how dangerous it is to indulge in speculative theology without a steady regard to revealed truth.

Perhaps one of the most difficult things to reconcile with the idea of God's perfect happiness is the fact that he is infinitely merciful, and frequently represented in Scripture as sympathising with the sufferings of his creatures ; and yet he is perfectly happy when millions are enduring the greatest sufferings ; and with all this suffering he must be fully acquainted. But we must bear in mind that the Almighty is not such a one as ourselves. His ways and thoughts and feelings are not as ours ; but, as high as the heavens are above the earth, so are his ways and thoughts above ours. Subject to no weakness or frailty, to no error or imperfection of any kind, he consequently must be happy, as well as holy, just, and good.

How amiable and transcendently glorious does the Divine character appear when viewed in the light of revelation, and as manifested in his works and ways. What incomprehensible majesty and awful grandeur there is unfolded in the revelations of his omnipotence ! What righteous and moral dignity in his justice, accompanied with dreadful displays of his hatred to sin, and his inflexible determination to punish the guilty and impenitent !

What amiableness and beauty in his benevolence, and in the manifestation of his boundless mercy ! What amazing intelligence in his infinite knowledge and consummate wisdom ! And how sublime and awful the thought, God is omnipresent ! How mean and contemptible are all human beings, and all earthly things, compared with the majesty, and greatness, and glory of the *Infinite One*, “who inhabiteth *Eternity*.” Yea, the splendour, and power, and honour, and glory of all the angelic host are but as dust and darkness compared with the *light* and *majesty*, the *power* and *purity* of *Uncreated Glory*. Then, with what deep humility and self-abasement, with what reverence and shame, with what adoration, and yet with what confidence should we draw nigh to *Him*, and worship at his footstool, and ascribe unto him the glory due to his great and holy name.



## VIII. ON THE SUPREME DIVINITY AND CHARACTER OF CHRIST.

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**Introductory remarks. On the names and titles of Christ. Isaiah's prediction.**

The opinions of learned men as to what is implied in the name Jesus, &c. Jesus is our Saviour. Jesus is "The Lord." Meaning of that title. Christ the only Saviour. He only can forgive sin, therefore must be God. Christ is "the Lord," or *Despotees*. Christ is the only true God—God over all; the Almighty God—proved from Scripture. Christ is Lord of all.

For several reasons it may be deemed necessary and proper, before discussing the nature and character of Christ, to consider the object of his incarnation and mission into our world, and the necessity of his mediatorial office; to investigate the origin of man, his primeval state, his fall or apostacy, his moral condition, and the misery and punishment to which he has subjected himself on account of his rebellion against his Maker; as it was the fall of man which rendered a Saviour necessary. But on the other hand it seems more necessary and proper, for various reasons, first to investigate the nature and character of Christ; and therefore, for the present, I shall only simply state that it is palpably evident from the pages of inspired history—

1. That man was originally wise, holy, and happy—
2. That he fell from that state of original purity through temptation and sin—

3. That his fall brought condemnation and misery upon him and all his posterity; and,

4. That without God's mercy and help, he must have been miserable for ever.

These subjects we shall hereafter investigate and discuss in connection with man's salvation, and shall now turn our attention to a few important particulars relative to the

#### CHARACTER OF CHRIST OUR SAVIOUR.

When man fell from his original glory, God in his boundless mercy provided a Saviour; and in this divine character there are several particulars which seem to require distinct and separate consideration. Such, for instance, as his Supreme Divinity; his Sonship; the mystical union of his two natures, divine and human; the sacrifice of himself to atone for sin; his Priesthood, and his union with the Father and the Holy Ghost, forming the ever-blessed and adorable Trinity. On these interesting and important subjects we shall endeavour to offer a few useful remarks. In this essay our aim will be, by rational and scriptural arguments, to establish the Deity of Christ, or in other words his supreme Divinity; viz. that he was and is really and eternally God, one with the *Infinite Mind*, of the same attributes and essence, that he comprehends in his nature all the properties and attributes essential to the existence of the only true God, and therefore must be one with the Father, one in the Godhead, and one in nature.

#### ARGUMENT FIRST: HIS DIVINITY.

The Divinity of Christ is implied in his various Names and Titles. Much has been written by learned men on this subject, especially in tracing the etymology and significant import

of the various names given to the Saviour in Scripture. Some of these philological dissertations are very curious, and to a great extent conjectural, others are very ingenious and embody arguments which are in accordance with the principles and rules of sound criticism, and of great service and importance to every theological student. I shall only make a few pertinent remarks on this subject, and recommend such as wish to gratify their critical curiosity to examine the elaborate investigations of the learned Moschopolus, Theophylact, Rabbi Hakkados, Damascenus, Gerhard, Witsius, and others.

1. It was predicted seven hundred years before God was manifested in the flesh, that "A virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel," which being interpreted is, "God with us." Now in the first salutation of the angel, Gabriel told the blessed virgin she should conceive in her womb, and bring forth a son, and should "call his name Jesus." (Luke i. 31.) And in the dream of Joseph the angel of the Lord informed him not only of the name of the Son of God, but also of the signification of that name: "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins," which according to the opinion of several learned men may be rendered, "He himself shall save," that is, by his own power—the power of God—which implies that he is God the Saviour. For thus saith Jehovah, "I am God, and beside me there is no Saviour." Now it is worthy of particular attention that the Evangelist Matthew, when speaking of the significant name of Jesus, and the interpretation of that name as given by the angel, says, "All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken

of the Lord by the Prophet, saying: ‘ Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel; which being interpreted, is, God with us.’” Matt. i. 23. Hence, though his name was not called Immanuel, but Jesus, the prophecy was fulfilled. The sense and meaning of the word *Immanuel* is fully comprehended in the name of Jesus; for “ *God with us,*” is “ *God our Saviour.*” Therefore if we compare the prediction of the prophet, the salutation of the angel, and the assertion of the evangelist together, we shall find that in point of meaning they perfectly agree, and set forth the grand and glorious truth that Christ was “ *God with us,*” or “ *God our Saviour.*” Bishop Pearson argues that according to the Jewish idiom, *called* signifies *to be*, and although Jesus was not named Immanuel, yet in the strictest sense he *was* Immanuel—God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, and thereby he became the Saviour of the world. This fact clearly sets forth the twofold nature of the Saviour; that is to say, shews that in his Divine, eternal nature, he was God; but by becoming incarnate, he was “ *God with us,*” or God united with human nature, and dwelling with man. And this view is in perfect accordance with the declaration made by St. John, where he asserts: “ The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.” And St. Paul, when contemplating the same subject, speaks of it as the great mystery of the Christian system: “ Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh,” &c. There are many sublime mysteries both in the kingdom of nature and in the kingdom of grace; but the greatest mystery is, that the Supreme Jehovah, the Lord of life and glory, should condescend to take upon himself our

nature, and be found in the fashion of a man. That he should become "God with us," to save us from our sins, is the great mystery "which angels desire to look into."

We are aware that, according to Josephus and others, the name Jesus was a very common name among the Jews, before and in the apostolic age. Hence, Paul makes mention of one Jesus, "who is called Justus;" and Elymas, the sorcerer, who was miraculously punished with blindness for perverting the right ways of the Lord, was called *Bar Jesus*, i.e. the son of Jesus. Acts xiii. 6. But while it is thus indisputable that that which in its proper sense belongs exclusively to our Saviour, *has been* given to other persons, it is not on that account the less significant in itself, or the less delightful to the ears of all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, when applied to the Saviour of the human race.

Jesus Christ, in the full and proper sense, is the Saviour of mankind, and therefore the *one God*, the Lord Jehovah, our righteousness. Hence, his own proclamation, "I, even I, am Jehovah; and beside me there is no Saviour." As to others, beside our Lord, who have been called by the name of Jesus, it was either in them an empty and high sounding title, imposed by human folly and ambitiously assumed, or conferred by the gracious indulgence of God on those whom he employed as the instruments of a comparatively inconsiderable, temporal salvation, and whom he intended to be in this respect types of his Son. Its signification, consequently, when applied to those persons, was as much lower as the shadow is inferior to the substance. In its full signification, it belongs exclusively to the Son of God, for he alone can save people from their sins. "None

can forgive sin but God," was a truth uttered by the enemies of Christ, by way of condemning our Lord's pretensions; but Christ did *effectually* forgive sins, and therefore Christ is God. He saves us, not by the doctrines of salvation, which he most clearly unfolded; not by the holy example of a most pure and spotless life; not by the stupendous miracles which he wrought; not merely by his incomparable sufferings, holy martyrdom, and bitter death; not because he hath openly shown the way to immortality and heaven by his resurrection and ascension; not because he hath *obtained authority from God* to bestow eternal life upon believers—thus far the Socinian can go, and yet deny the Lord that bought him, and ridicule the idea of the Saviour's Supreme Divinity. Jesus saves us, because he is our God, "God with us," "The Great God and our Saviour."

It may be proper further to remark that, Christ is not a Saviour in the sense as set forth by the doctors of the Roman Church; that is, on account of his sufferings and death for what they call "*mortal sins*," leaving it to believers to satisfy for *venial sins*, partly by suffering temporary punishment by deeds of penance in this life, and partly by the torments of purgatory in the life to come. In this way the doctors and teachers of that corrupt system most unjustly and impiously divide the work of man's salvation between Christ and man, vainly attempting to shelter sentiments, palpably erroneous and unscriptural, by heaping absurdities upon absurdities, and confounding error with truth. St. Peter speaks most clearly and explicitly before the Jewish council:—referring to Christ, he says: "This is the stone which was set at nought by you builders,

which is become the head of the corner; Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts iv. 11, 12. Christ saves us by procuring for us and applying to us, a real, spiritual, and eternal salvation. The nature of this salvation, and the manner in which Christ "obtained eternal redemption for us," we shall hereafter more fully discuss.

2. Christ is designated "the Lord," "The Lord from heaven," and he requires us to honour him with this appellation. "Ye call me Lord and Master," said Christ, "and ye say well, for so I am." Faith, in the once unbelieving Thomas, addressed him as Lord and God, "My Lord, and my God." And indeed, "every tongue is bound to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." "There is not any reason," says Witsius, "why we should hesitate to call Christ *Despotees*, that is Lord, Ruler of all, or to affirm that he is so called in Scripture; since as God he has all things in common with the Father, he is unquestionably *Despotees* in the same sense with the Father." In the second epistle of St. Peter ii. 1, where this word occurs, it evidently relates to Christ rather than to the Father; for the expression *bought* leads us to this interpretation; and false prophets and heretical teachers have generally directed their blasphemies and infamous attacks more immediately against Christ than against the Father.

Some persons, who dispute the Divinity and consequently the supremacy of Christ, argue the inferiority of the Saviour from the words of St. Jude: "For there are certain men crept in unawares—turning the grace of our God into las-

civiousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." From this they infer that God the Father must be regarded as the Sovereign Ruler of all, and Christ as the Lord and Master of his people. But as it has been justly remarked: "This is not allowed by the article, which being common to all the epithets, shows that the subject is one and the same." And we might also remark, that in several manuscripts and versions, the words are as follows; "The only Lord, and our Lord Jesus Christ," the word *God* being omitted. The Complutensian edition, published in 1515, obviates all doubt, giving the words thus: "The only God and Lord, our Lord Jesus." "The Syriac, the Ethiopic, and both the Arabic versions take the expressions in the same sense;" and Wesley, who was a proficient Greek scholar, translates the words, "our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ." Further, this title of honour is in reason due to Christ, for he is Jehovah, and possessed in himself the whole excellency of Deity, which is the root and foundation of Divine dominion. He is expressly called Jehovah in Isaiah: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness; Prepare ye the way of Jehovah." That is Christ. And again: "Surely shall one say, in Jehovah have I righteousness and strength; *even* to him shall men come." That this expression relates to Christ, is not only evident from the scope of the passage, it is moreover, confirmed by St. Paul, who applied to Christ the verse immediately preceding. Now Christ being the Lord Jehovah, he has the same authority and power with the Father over all things that are. "All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made which is made;" and on that account he has dominion



over all. The apostle emphatically asserts : " There is one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." Hence Christ has a Lordship purely Divine, in reference to which all creatures, and particularly rational creatures, angels as well as men, are his servants ; being dependent upon him, and bound to take his laws for the rule and standard of their actions. And while good men and angels willingly submit, and cheerfully recognise his authority, wicked men and devils yield, though reluctantly. Hence, " At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." In these three terms, all created intelligences are comprehended.

" Jesus, the name high over all,  
In hell or earth or sky;  
Angels and men before it fall,  
And devils fear and fly."

Thus then, the application of the titles, Jesus, Immanuel, Lord, and Jehovah, all prove the Divinity of the Saviour. On this subject Dr. Waterland remarks, " If Jehovah signifies the eternal and immutable God, it is manifest that the name is incommunicable, therefore Jehovah can signify nothing but one God, to whom it is applied ; and if this name is applicable to Christ, the conclusion is irresistible, Christ must be the same *one God*. Not the same person with the Father, to whom also the name Jehovah is attributed, but the same substance, the same essence, the same Jehovah revealed in the Person of Christ."

If Christ is the supreme Lord and governor of the universe, which we have proved to be the case, he must be

truly and properly God. For as the Ruler of universal dominion he must possess the attributes *peculiar* to the great Eternal; such as, infinite wisdom, almighty power, boundless benevolence, immutability and eternity. Nothing inferior to these could qualify him for the government of universal empire. These perfections are the foundation of his illimitable and eternal dominion: hence his Lordship is, and must be, boundless, supreme, and eternal. All notions inferior to these, are unsuitable and insulting to God. The Lord Jehovah is not a mere Governor, Ruler and Protector, but a sovereign Ruler, an almighty Protector, an omniscient and omnipresent Governor, an eternal, immutable, all-sufficient Preserver and Saviour. Whatever falls short of this, is not properly consistent with the notions associated with the name and character of the Lord Jehovah.

# ON THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

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## ARGUMENT SECOND : ON "THE WORD."

The **WORD** means Jesus Christ. Some writers think that St. John borrowed the term **WORD** from Philo, or from the Chaldee Paraphrases, or from the Hellenists. The Hebrew phrase *Debar Yehovah*, and the Greek *Logos Kurios*. *Debar Yehovah* frequently mentioned in the Old Testament, and evidently means a personal Word. The *Memra* in Chaldee means The Word. The *Memra* frequently mentioned by the Targumists. Quotations from the Rev. W. Cooke's Explanations of the Targums. The Testimony of Philo. Quotations from Irenæus. Theophilus of Antioch. Tertullian, Clemens Alexandrinus, Athenagoras, and Melito. Arius and Unitarianism. "The Bibliotheca Fratrum." Unitarian and Trinitarian Authors. The conclusion—the Word is one eternally with the Father.

CHRIST is called "*The Word*," and it is emphatically stated, "And the Word was God." The reading of this passage at once conveys to our minds the idea that *the Word*, or *Logos* (by whom all understand Christ), is called God, in the highest sense; and in the 14th verse of the same chapter it is said, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory,)" &c. This clearly shows that by the Word is meant none other than Jesus Christ. And to argue this question, in my judgment, would be superfluous and a waste of time. Why the Evangelist John gives the Saviour this title in the commencement of his gospel, has been a subject of inquiry and dispute among the learned. In my opinion, his design was to set forth and establish in the commencement of his sacred history the supreme or absolute Divinity of the Saviour. And the manner in which he enters upon this work cannot fail to arrest the attention of every serious reader. His predication in the introduction are very bold and striking, and however the

Socinian and the infidel may assert that the first fourteen verses of this chapter are nothing but human composition, they most certainly exhibit the characteristics of the highest style of divine inspiration. The sentiments comprehended in this portion of God's Word, and the language made use of to express those sentiments, evidently shew the composition to be the effusion of an inspired mind. Some writers have thought, and asserted, that the Evangelist borrowed this peculiar appellation or title from the writings of Philo the Jew, who flourished about forty years before Christ, and wrote several important works on Creation, History, &c., in such an elegant style, that he has been called "The Jewish Plato." Others suppose that the *Chaldee paraphrases* were the source from which he derived it. Others again have concluded that he borrowed it from the Hellenists, or Grecian Jews, to whom we are indebted for the version of the Old Testament called the *Septuagint*, or that of the Seventy. That this expression frequently occurs in the writings of Philo, in the Chaldee paraphrases, in the Septuagint, and also in the Jerusalem Targum, has been clearly shewn by several learned authors. But, as Watson very wisely observes, "The most natural conclusion appears to be, that, as St. John was a plain unlearned man, chiefly conversant in the Holy Scriptures, he derived this term from the sacred books of his own nation, in which the Hebrew phrase *DEBAR YEHOVAH*, (the Word of Jehovah) frequently occurs in passages which must be understood to speak of a *personal Word*, and which phrase is rendered *Logos Kurion* by the Septuagint interpreters." We have no reason to suppose, from the writings of St. John, that he was at all acquainted with the works of any of the

ancient poets or philosophers. St. Paul frequently alludes to them, but St. John, to my knowledge, never does, either directly or indirectly. We have therefore the strongest reason to conclude, that he derived the term from the ancient Jewish Scriptures. It is evident to every attentive and intelligent reader of the Hebrew Scriptures, that there are frequent intimations of a plurality of persons in the Godhead, represented as existing distinctly, but having the same essential attributes of eternal Divinity. And if it can be proved that one of these persons was known by the name or title of "*The Word*"—the appellation here given by the Evangelist—then the manner in which he applies it to Christ is very easily accounted for ; and I think it will be no very difficult matter to shew, from indisputable authority, that this was the case. In Gen. xv. 1, we are informed that " After these things the Word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram : I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." On this passage Dr. Clarke remarks: " This is the first place where God is represented as revealing himself by his word. Some learned men suppose that the "*debar Yehovah*," translated here *word of the Lord*, means the same with the *logos tou Theou* of St. John, chap. i. ver. 1, and by the Chaldee paraphrases in the next clause, called *meimera*, my word, and in other places *meimera daiya*, the word of Yeya, a contraction for Jehovah, which they appear always to consider as a *person*; and which they distinguish from *pithgama*, which signifies merely a *word* spoken or any *part* of speech." The text itself clearly shews that by "*The Word*" a person is meant. Hence, "the Word came unto Abram in a vision, and spoke unto him,

saying, Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield," &c. A mere word may be spoken, but a personal word only can speak. Again, the manner in which the personal pronoun is used plainly sets forth the same fact. "I (the Word of the Lord) am thy shield;" and in reply Abram said: "Lord God, what wilt thou give me?" And again, at the fourth verse: "The Word of the Lord came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir," &c. The passage throughout is worded in such a manner as to imply the personality of the Word, and to shew that the Word is none other than a person who is one with God the Father Almighty. And this Word of Jehovah, who made all things, and was Abram's shield, &c., "was made flesh, and dwelt among us; full of grace and truth." John i. 14. Hence, by comparing Scripture with Scripture, we clearly see the supreme Deity of Christ set forth in this significant title, *The Word*.

There are several other passages equally as comprehensive and explicit, and which admit of the same comparison, and serve to illustrate the same important truth, two or three of which it may be proper and necessary to notice.

1. Samuel iii. 21, reads thus: "And the Lord appeared again in Shiloh: for the Lord revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the Word of the Lord." In this passage it is evident, beyond all dispute, that the Word of the Lord is to be understood in a personal sense; that is, God appeared to Samuel by his personal Word in a vision. The Word of the Lord, as mentioned in Psalms xviii. 30, is capable of the same construction, which reads thus: "The Word of the Lord is tried: *He* is a buckler to all those that trust in him." Here the personal pronoun refers to "the Word of the Lord," from which we cannot do other-

wise than conclude that a person is meant, and not a verbal communication of the will or sentiments of another. And in many other passages of the Old Testament it is evident, from the text and the grammatical construction of the sentences, that a person is meant. All that can fairly be said in opposition to these remarks is, that the passages in question, if we consider them elliptical expressions, may be otherwise explained. Certainly, and so might almost any other passage; and it is to be feared and deeply lamented that in this way unfair criticism has, in many instances, explained away the natural and obvious meaning of divine truth. Many sceptical critics first suppose, then affirm, and from their suppositions and groundless affirmations draw their heretical conclusions, and thereby contradict the plain and evident meaning of the sacred text. This mode of interpretation is frequently adopted by Arian and Socinian writers, in order to explain away the true Divinity of the Saviour.

In addition to the evidence which may be gathered from the canonical Scriptures in favour of the personality and supreme Divinity of the *Word of God*, we might refer to the ancient Jewish writers, who cannot reasonably be suspected of being biased in favour of this doctrine. The Rev. William Cooke, in his able reply to a critique, has made an ample selection from the Targumists and Hellenistic Jews, to prove that they regarded the *Memra*, or Word, as a Divine Person distinct from the Father.

We furnish a few verbal quotations, illustrative of this, from the Jewish Targums. The reader will bear in mind that the term *Memra*, in Chaldee, means Word. In fact, the term is the same in Chaldee as the term *Logos* in

Greek. The use of this term will be understood by remembering that *The Word* is one of the appellations by which our blessed Saviour is frequently set forth by the New Testament writers. Thus St. John says: 'In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' With this explanation we proceed to give some examples of the use of this word by the Chaldee Paraphrasts, and thus to establish the truth of our remarks:—

“And the Memra of Jehovah created man in his own likeness.”—*Jerusalem Targum on Gen. i. 27.*

It should be remembered that our Lord himself declares that he is “The only-begotten Son of God,” and is frequently so termed in the New Testament. In Gen. iii. 22, the Jerusalem Targum applies the same appellation to the Divine Memra; and in the same passage the creation of man is again ascribed to him in the following words: “And the Memra of Jehovah said, Behold, Adam, whom I have created, is the only (begotten) in the world, as I am the only-begotten in the high heavens.”

The creation of the whole universe is ascribed to the Divine Memra in the following language: “And the Memra of Jehovah called to Adam, and said, Behold, the world which I have created is open to my view; darkness and light are before me; why then dost thou think to conceal thyself from my presence? Where is the commandment which I enjoined upon thee?”—*Jerusalem Targum on Gen. iii. 9.* And the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan on Gen. iii. 8, say that it was the voice of Memra which Adam heard in the garden: “And they heard the voice of the Memra of Jehovah walking in the garden.” The



translation of Enoch is ascribed to the same Divine Person. The version is as follows : " And Enoch worshipped God in truth, and he was not, for he was taken away by the Memra." In Scripture it is said, " God took him." Now, as the Targumists ascribe it to the Memra, or Word, we may conclude in what character he was regarded by these writers.

The Targum of Onkelos on Gen. xxviii. 20 and 21, reads thus : " And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If the Memra of Jehovah will be my help, and will guard me in this way in which I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, and I return to the house of my father in peace, then the Memra of Jehovah shall be my God." Such is the clear testimony of the most ancient and literal paraphrase of the Jews. A similiar testimony is contained in the Targum of Jonathan on the same passage ; hence we see that God and Memra are words used interchangeably.

The Jerusalem paraphrase on Exodus iii. 14, confirms the remarks just made : " And the Memra of Jehovah said unto Moses : He who said, Let the world exist, and it did exist ; and who says, Let the world continue to exist, and it shall continue to exist, is the same Being who hath said, Thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel : I AM hath sent me unto you." And Christ said on one occasion, " Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I AM." Let the candid reader compare these two passages.

The Targumists say also that it was the Divine Memra who appeared to Moses in Sinai, and who gave the law amidst the solemn wonders which were there exhibited.

“ And the Memra of Jehovah spake all these words, saying,” &c.

Should any one doubt the correctness of the above quotations, let him examine the passages for himself, as Mr. Cooke has done, who remarks: “ Any person capable of reading the Chaldee language may verify them himself by referring to the places respectively in Walton’s Polyglott.” Were it necessary, many other passages might be selected from these Jewish authors in confirmation of the Divinity and Eternity of the Memra, Logos, or Word ; but we deem the above enough to satisfy all such as are open to conviction and seeking after truth.

It may be proper, and indeed necessary, here to make a few remarks in reference to the nature and character of the Targums from which we have made the above quotations.

Targum is a Chaldee word, and signifies translation or interpretation; but according to Dr. Townley, author of “ Illustrations of Biblical Literature,” it is chiefly considered to mean, “ The version or translation of the Scriptures into the East Aramean or Chaldee dialect.” Subsequently to the Babylonish Captivity, when the law was read in the synagogue on the Sabbath-day, in *pure Hebrew*, it was customary for the officiating scribe or expounder to subjoin an explanation in the Chaldee language, in order to render it intelligible to the people, who had but an imperfect knowledge of the Biblical Hebrew. These translations or interpretations, which are ten in number, on various parts of the Old Testament, were ultimately completed.

The *Jerusalem Targum*, from which several of the pre-

ceding extracts are taken, was written in the dialect of Jerusalem, namely that which was spoken by the Jews after their return from Babylon; which in all probability would be an admixture of Hebrew and Chaldee. This Targum is supposed by several learned philologists and critics to have been compiled by various authors, and formed from extracts and collections. This Targum was published by Buxtorf, in his great Rabbinical Bible, in 1547, and by Walton in the London Polyglott, with an improved Latin translation.

*The Targum of Onkelos* is supposed to have been executed about the commencement of the Christian era, or a few years previously. Onkelos was a Jew of great learning and high esteem among his own countrymen. Dr. Townley says: "It is a strictly literal version, word for word of the original text of the Hebrew Pentateuch." It was printed in Buxtorf's Hebrew Bible, and in the London Polyglott.

I have no need to offer any remarks on the other Targums, not having made any quotations from them. It may be necessary just to remark, that we do not appeal to the Targumistic writings as productions which are authoritative or divine, or as writings free from error or folly; yet they are of great service, inasmuch as they embody the doctrinal views held by the Jewish Church in ancient times. In the preceding quotations, we see that "The passages which Christians have been accustomed to apply to the Messiah were so applied by the ancient Jews, and that the Word, or Memra, was regarded by the ancient Jews as a real Being, as truly God, as possessing the attributes of the one Eternal Jehovah."

To the above testimony, we might add that of Philo, the celebrated Jew of Alexandria. He calls the Logos the "Eternal Logos," and asserts that "He is necessarily eternal, and the image of the invisible God." He also speaks of the Logos as the manager and ruler of the universe. And, that he means the same person as do the inspired writers, the Prophets and Apostles, the Targumist and Jewish commentators, and that that person is none other than Jesus Christ, is evident. Hence, he (Philo) calls him "*The first-begotten Son of God*," "a Man, the Beginning, the Eternal Image, the Most Ancient Angel, the Archangel of many names, the High Priest of this world, the Anointed," &c. He also says, "The Logos shall stand as Mediator between the creature and the Creator. He is an Ambassador sent from God to man, immortal and incorruptible. The Man after the image of God," &c. In these expressions, and in many others of a similar character, Philo speaks of Christ as a Divine Person, and connects therewith ideas of his humanity, or the mystical union of his two natures, human and divine. From what source Philo derived this information, has been a disputed question among the learned. Some argue that he derived it from Platonism; but, in our judgment, it is much more reasonable to conclude, with Dr. Pye Smith, that he derived it from the Jews, or from ancient patriarchal tradition. "And it would be most natural for Philo, if he found anything in the Platonic philosophy favourable to the personality of the Divine Logos, to enlarge on the scanty conceptions of the Greek philosopher from the theology of his own country." The Rev. R. Watson, in his *Theological Institutes* (vol. ii. page 77), shews that Philo must have carefully read

those portions of the Jewish Scriptures which relate to the personality of the Divine Word, or where the phrase "Debar Yehovah" occurs, and also the Chaldee paraphrases, where the equivalent phrase Memra occurs, inasmuch as his expressions so perfectly accord with these ancient interpretations. "Why then," he asks, "resort to Plato, when the source of the Logos of Philo is so plainly indicated? And why suppose St. John to have borrowed from Philo, when the Logos was an established form of theological speech, and when the sources from which Philo derived it, the Scriptures and the paraphrases, were as accessible to the Apostle as to the philosophical Jew of Alexandria?" Page 78.

We have now clearly shewn that Christ our Saviour was spoken of in the ancient Jewish Scriptures as a distinct person in unity with the Father, under the title or phrase, "*The Word of Jehovah*," or Divine Word; that this notion was entertained by the earliest Jewish commentators, and clearly set forth in their writings; and by Philo, one of the most learned men and accomplished scholars of the age and nation in which he lived, and who was well versed in both Jewish and Grecian literature, both sacred and profane, and whose works are appealed to as productions of standing worth and importance in matters of dispute by men of almost every class and creed. It may be well to notice further, that the ancient fathers, or those Christian authors who wrote immediately after the Apostles and the two following centuries, speak of the Word, or Logos, in similar terms.

*Justin Martyr*, who was born about the close of the first century, declares Christ to have been the Person who ap-

peared to Abraham under the Oak of Mamre; and that it was Christ who appeared to Moses in the bush on Mount Horeb; also that the Word of God existed *as God*, and that he is "the Lord God of Israel."

*Irenæus* declares that "Christ is God;" "that he was adored by the prophets;" "was God of the living, and the living God; that Abraham learned divine truth from the Logos, or Word of God; that the Word of God, *Jesus Christ*, on account of his immense love, became what we are, that he might make us what he is," &c.

*Theophilus of Antioch* affirms it as his opinion, that it was Christ who came into Paradise, in the appearance of God, and conversed with Adam. And *Tertullian* declares that it was the Son of God who spoke to Moses, and who appeared as God at various times to Abraham and the prophets in visions and dreams; and that no other God conversed with men beside the Word, who was afterwards to be made flesh. And the same author says, "Christ was the Creator of the world;" and that "Jesus Christ was from all eternity the Word of God."

*Clemens Alexandrinus* says: "The Logos is the Maker of all things, is the universal Ruler and Instructor, without guile. Christ is the Eternal Logos, Infinite Age, Eternal Light, Fountain of Mercy," &c.

*Athenagoras* says: "The Mind and the Word of God is the Son of God, and we who preach God, preach God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost; and the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are one. *Melito*, Bishop of Sardis, who lived in the second century, says: "We are worshippers of one God, who is before all and in all, in his Christ, who is truly God, the Eternal Word."

And this doctrine, in reference to the personal Divinity of the *Dabar*, *Memra*, *Logos*, or *Word*, has been held or set forth in the writings of the ablest theologians in this and many other countries ever since the apostolic age.

Before dismissing this article, or closing this argument, I deem it proper to remark, that early in the fourth century, the doctrine of our Saviour's absolute Divinity was disputed, and ultimately denied by one of the presbyters of the Church of Alexandria, named Arius; and his followers were afterward known by the name of Arians, but at present are better known by the name of Socinians or Unitarians; though the Unitarians do not hold exactly the same views as those which were held by the ancient Arians. Arius we are informed, "maintained that Christ, or the Son of God, was totally and essentially distinct from the Father; that he was the first and noblest being whom God created—the instrument by whose subordinate operations he formed the universe; and therefore inferior to the Father both in nature and dignity." The Arians admitted that the Son was the Logos, or Divine Word, but denied that Word to have been eternal, or one in union with the Father. They believed that Christ had nothing of a man in him but the flesh to which the Logos or Word was joined, which was the same as the soul of man. These opinions were first condemned by a council at Alexandria in 320, and afterwards by 380 Fathers in the General Council at Nice in 325. Arius, after a life of contention and trouble, died an awful death at Constantinople. "When his friends were conducting him in triumph to the great church of the city, Arius, pressed as he thought by natural commands, stepped aside, but expired on the

spot;" and, like Judas who sold his Lord and Master, "his bowels gushed out." The doctrines of Arius did not expire with him, but continued to spread under the protection of Constantius, until suppressed by Theodosius the Great. In the fifth century these doctrines were embraced and propagated by the Vandals in Africa, and the Goths in Asia. Italy, Gaul, and Spain, according to some historians, were also deeply affected with this doctrine; and in the sixth century it spread over a considerable portion of Europe, "*but sunk almost at once* when the Vandals were driven out of Africa, and the Goths out of Italy, by the arms of Justinian. Arianism was again revived in the West by the notorious Servetus, in the year 1531, for which it is said he suffered death, under the sanction of John Calvin. After this the doctrine gained a footing in Geneva and in Poland; but at length it degenerated in great measure into Socinianism." Some theologians think that Erasmus and Grotius leaned to this doctrine in their comments on various portions of Scripture. In the eighteenth century the Socinian controversy was revived by Mr Whiston, Dr. S. Clarke, and others, who were ably opposed by Dr. Waterland. Those who deny that Christ pre-existed as the Eternal Logos of the Father, in our day generally go by the name of *Unitarians*.

Some of those (low Arians) who believe in the pre-existence of Christ, believe also that he is but a creature of God, and consequently subordinate to the Father; others of them believe, with Socinus, that Christ was nothing but a mere man, who had no existence before he was conceived by the blessed virgin. They own that the name of God is given to Jesus Christ, but contend that it



is only a deputed title, which invests him with authority over all created beings; and there are some Unitarians whom I have met, who will not allow him this honour, but boldly and impiously assert that he had nothing in his nature superior to the prophets and Apostles; and some even go so far as to designate him an impostor. Much has been written by learned men on this important subject. "The Polones Fratres" (the writings of the Polonian Brethren) alone consists of six vols. folio, under the title of "Bibliotheca Fratrum." This work, we are informed, was published in the year 1656, in one great collection, and in addition to this many separate works have been published: such as, "Haynes on the Attributes and Worship of God and the Office of Jesus Christ, Dr. Lardner on the Logos, the well known Dr. Priestley's works, Lindsay and Carpenter on Unitarianism," &c.

The doctrines taught in these works have been carefully investigated by Dr. Waterland, Horne, Owen, Hoornbeck, Calvin, John Wesley, Macgowen, and many others, and proved to be antisciptural. Unitarianism at the present day is embraced by comparatively few who have been educated in that doctrine. The converts to this creed generally run into Deism, and some end in Atheism, and go down to the grave in misery and disgrace. Were it necessary, I could name several of this class, but here it would be out of place. Then let me affectionately caution the reader never to indulge in any notions derogatory to the supreme Divinity of Christ, the Saviour of the world. For in him "all fulness dwells;" as we have before proved that "The Word" (Jesus Christ) is one eternally with the Father: "I and my Father are one."

## ON THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

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### ARGUMENT THIRD: ON SCRIPTURE DECLARATIONS.

Various texts examined.

It may be said by those who oppose the doctrine of our Saviour's true Divinity, that all we have advanced in favour of this doctrine is only inferential. We shall therefore now proceed to shew, that in Scripture Christ is emphatically designated God, and that he is spoken of as possessing every property and attribute essential to Deity. In plain, simple language, he is called "God," "The only true God," "God over all," "The ever-blessed God," and "The Almighty God." The first passage to which the attention of the reader is called, is 1 John v. 20, which reads thus: "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, ~~even~~ in his Son Jesus Christ. *This is the true God*, and eternal life." Can any language or form of speech be plainer or more explicit? It is completely free from ambiguity, and consequently cannot be misconstrued without a wilful perversion of its obvious meaning. On this text Mr. Wesley remarks: "*This Jesus is the only living and true God*, together with the Father and the Spirit, and the

original fountain of *eternal life*. So the beginning and the end of the epistle agree." I sometimes wonder that Unitarian authors, who are generally men of education and learning, and on religious subjects liberal in sentiment, are not ashamed of their unsound criticism on this great question. Every kind of sophism has been resorted to, and every description of unjust and unfair criticism employed, in order to establish their principles and to mislead the ignorant. For any man to dispute the Divinity of Christ, with the above passage before his eyes, he might with as much regard to truth undertake to prove from Scripture that there is no God at all, or at any rate that there is no reference to his existence in the Bible. But we are told that those passages where the Godhead of Christ is apparently set forth, are either wrong translations or interpolations, and in either case are not to be found in the original. To this objection we answer, that men of the highest classic fame, and as well versed in biblical literature, and in the philology of the sacred languages, as any Unitarian authors, either of ancient or modern times, have never disputed the correctness of our authorised version in the above passage. All the translations which I have examined on this text substantially agree in asserting Christ to be the "*True God*;" and St. John, in the commencement of this epistle, also clearly and emphatically states the same glorious truth.

Let the Unitarian carefully examine the original of 2 Peter i. 1, and he will find that it may with propriety be translated, "Them that have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of *our God and Saviour Jesus Christ*." So say several learned commentators; and,

in fact, this is implied in our authorised version. It is through faith in the righteousness and sacrifice of Christ we obtain the precious blessing connected therewith. Jesus Christ is therefore "our God and Saviour." And, according to Psalm xlv. 6, 7, and Heb. i. 8, 9, Christ is called "God" by the Father. This is certainly the highest authority to which we can appeal. "Unto the Son he said, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever," &c. Wesley says: "God, in the singular number, is never in Scripture used absolutely of any but the Supreme Being."

And that none but *Christ* is meant, is evident from the 9th verse, where he is spoken of as the Anointed One. And, as he is the Mediator in his twofold nature, the phrase, "God, even thy God," is very applicable and proper. In my opinion, no form of words could more clearly express the absolute Divinity of Christ the Son of God than the passage before us, including the 8th and 9th verse. In Revelations xxi. 5—7, we read thus: "And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me—I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." In discussing this passage, we have first to ascertain who it is that speaks, and secondly what he affirms respecting himself. By comparing this passage with Rev. i. 7, 8, and iii. 21, it will not be difficult for us to determine who is the speaker, or the person sitting upon the throne. In chap. i., ver. 7, 8, St. John says: "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they *also* which *pierced him*: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. I am Alpha and

Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith *The Lord*, which is, and which was, and which is to come, *the Almighty*." Now, that this "Lord Almighty" was none other than our Lord Jesus Christ, will appear evident, beyond all doubt and contradiction, if we read from the 10th to the 18th verse: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last," &c. "And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the *Son of man*, clothed with a garment," &c. "And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not, I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." The same person as is designated in this chapter the "Lord Almighty," is the person who was "*pierced*," "who was dead and is alive again, and who liveth for evermore," and who declares himself to be the "Alpha and Omega, the first and the last," and who in the 21st chapter says, "I will be his God;" and St. John says, "He was like unto the Son of man."

If these passages do not predicate, in the most unequivocal and conclusive manner, the eternal power and Godhead of Christ, language must be devoid of any definite meaning; and I think none except the wilfully blind, or excusably negligent, can arrive at any other conclusion. Quotations in which this grand and glorious truth is set forth might be multiplied to almost any extent. In Rev. xx. 12, St. John says: "I saw the dead, small and great, stand

before God." This evidently refers to Christ, because "The Father judgeth no man; he hath committed all judgment to the Son." "God will judge the world by that man whom he hath ordained," namely, Jesus Christ. "For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ." "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God." Let the candid reader compare these two passages together, and he will find that the only conclusion he can come to is, that *Christ is God*—the supreme Judge of mankind. St. Jude concludes his epistle by ascribing to the Saviour the glory and majesty, the wisdom and power, which belong exclusively to the Eternal and Supreme Jehovah: "To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen." In this passage "The Saviour" is identified with "The only wise God," which shews that God in Christ (in which we see Divinity united with humanity) was the mysterious Person who effected man's salvation. Jesus Christ, who was Lord, being God from eternity, took upon him human nature, that he might become our Saviour and Redeemer. Hence, the propriety and spiritual grandeur of this doxology: "To the only wise God our Saviour." The only wise God became our Saviour by taking upon himself our nature, and was found in fashion as a man, and in that nature "he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." On this sublime and glorious theme the apostle Paul was contemplating when he said: "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." The whole weight of the apostle's argument rests upon the pre-exist-

ence and antecedent glory and riches of Christ. Take these away, and the argument is powerless, yea ridiculous. For, if Christ did not exist in glory before his incarnation—if his origin was in the stable at Bethlehem, as some writers assert—in what sense was he rich? and wherein did his grace and condescension appear? Nowhere; for he was notoriously poor from the commencement of his earthly existence. But when we consider that before his incarnation he was infinitely exalted in glory and dignity, his condescension appears without a parallel. There is a passage in Titus which ought not to be overlooked, where St. Paul says: “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” It may be argued, from the grammatical construction of the sentence, that two persons will appear at the judgment-seat, namely, the “great God,” who is the Father, and “Jesus Christ,” who is inferior to the Father. But we have good authority to say, that the conjunction (*kai*), in the original, may be, and is frequently, rended *even*. Hence, the passage has been translated by several eminent scholars: “The great God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ.” (See Wesley and Dwight on this text.) It also might be remarked, that in the authorised version the conjunction *and* is occasionally used between the word *God* and the phrase “*Our Father*,” but it would be ridiculous to infer, from this mode of expression, that God is one person and the Father another person. Let the word *even* in such cases be substituted, and the texts would read: God, *even* our Father; which is evidently the true and proper meaning of the phrase wherever it occurs.

I refer the doubtful reader to Gal. i. 4, and 1 Thess. i.

3, where the phrase "God *and* our Father" occurs; and then compare these two passages with the text in question, and I hesitate not to say, that the result of his deliberations and comparisons will be a conviction, that "The great God," as mentioned by St. Paul, in Titus ii. 13, refers to none other than "our Saviour Jesus Christ." Besides, it might be further argued that God the Father will not appear in judgment, only in the person of Jesus Christ. Christ is everywhere in Scripture represented and spoken of as occupying the throne and seat of judgment at the great day of final accounts. In confirmation of this important fact, I refer the reader to the following passages: Job xix. 25, 27; Matt. xxv. 31, 32; Acts i. 11; Rom. ii. 16; 2 Cor. v. 10; 1 Thess. iv. 16; Acts xvii. 31; 2 Tim. iv. 1; and Rev. i. 7.

Many other passages are to be found of similar import. It will be seen, in all those passages above referred to, that Christ is emphatically spoken of as the Judge of mankind, consequently he is the "great God" who will *appear* at the judgment of the great and final day. There is another passage on this subject which deserves our distinct and particular attention. I refer to the sublime and comprehensive description of Isaiah (ix. 6), where, as Mr. Dyer observes, "The seven famous titles of Christ are summed up in one verse:" "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." This passage, as most readers are aware, has been the subject of a great deal of unfair criticism, and in many cases it has been scandalously perverted and im-



piously misapplied. One thing is sufficiently clear to every intelligent reader, namely, that the child born and the son given, is the *mighty God*, identically one with the *everlasting Father* and the *Prince of Peace*. To deny this would be to give a direct and palpable contradiction to the plain sense and meaning of the sacred text. Under these considerations I leave the intelligent and pious reader to judge as to the propriety of applying this prediction to any person but the Lord Jesus Christ, and also whether it may not with the strictest propriety be applied to him. He was born a child among the Jewish people. He was designated "The Son of God," and "The Son of man." He is everywhere spoken of as the Governor and Counsellor of his people. He asserted that he was *one* with the everlasting Father, and consequently the "*mighty God*;" and he is the *Prince of Peace*. To apply these appellations to either Hezekiah, or to any other earthly prince, appears almost too absurd to be believed. But learned men, who have had their minds confused and prejudiced, have in many instances, and on various subjects, had recourse to the most ridiculous and unsound criticism. Their exegetical effusions on some passages of Scripture are more like burlesque than sober and rational explanations. And this is sure to be the case whenever mere scholastic learning and ingenuity take the place of sound reason and solid sense; and especially where the eyes of the understanding are darkened by prejudice and pre-conceived notions. Knowledge is of great service when properly used; but mere knowledge, without candour, rectitude of mind, and discriminating wisdom, is a dangerous element, and I am afraid that in the interpretation of Scripture, in many instances, it has been misap-

plied, so as to confuse and misguide the unlearned. If this has not been the case in reference to the subject in question—namely, the Divinity of Christ—I greatly mistake. Let any judicious, well-informed mind peruse the pages of Socinian criticism on the various passages which relate to the Deity of the Saviour, and in which his Supreme Divinity is clearly set forth, and I think he cannot be otherwise than disgusted with the sophistical method of argument which is generally pursued, and the flimsy ground on which many of their objections to this doctrine are based.

The appellations of Christ, and the numerous declarations concerning him, import a peculiar and exalted dignity, such, in fact, as cannot belong to any mere creature, however exalted in rank and station. He is styled “The Holy One”—a characteristic peculiar to Deity, considered in the definite and infinite sense here spoken of. He is *one with the Father* (John x. 27—38), having not merely a oneness of consent, as some have supposed and asserted, but a oneness of essence and nature. He is spoken of as “The King,” possessed of peculiar dignity and glory, (Matt. xxv. 34)—as having power to fix the changeless destinies of men and devils. He is the author and bestower of spiritual life, true holiness, happiness, and eternal glory. (Gal. ii. 20; Col. iii. 4; Phil. i. 28.) He is the “Resurrection and the Life”—that is, he has life within himself; hence, he had power to quicken himself when dead, and power to communicate that vitality to those who were dead: “All that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and come forth.” “My sheep hear my voice; I give unto them eternal life,” &c. “I will raise

them up at the last day." He is "Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption"—that is, he is the author of these blessings to his people. He is "The Image of the invisible God"—"The brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person." 2 Cor. iv. 4; Col. i. 15; Heb. i. 3. He is the Prince of Life and Salvation—by which we are to understand that he is the author of these blessings. Acts iii. 15; Heb. v. 9. He is called "The Lord of glory." This august title, which is peculiar to the great Jehovah, plainly shews him to be one with the supreme God, who is styled the "Father of glory," and with the Holy Ghost, "The Spirit of glory." 1 Cor. ii. 8; Eph. i. 17; 1 Peter iv. 14. The application of this title to all the three persons shews that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are in unity the "God of glory." Christ is called "Lord of all." Acts x. 36; Rom. x. 12. He has supreme authority, dominion, and power over all created worlds, and the innumerable multitude of intelligent beings by whom they are peopled. Unto him every knee shall bow, in heaven, in earth, and in hell; for he is "Lord of the dead and of the living." He had power in the state of his humility to forgive sin, and he confirmed this high and peculiar authority by the working of miracles in the most sovereign manner, as we shall hereafter shew.

## ON THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

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### ARGUMENT FOURTH : ON THE ATTRIBUTES OF CHRIST.

Christ is eternal and immutable. He is omnipotent. He is omniscient. He is omnipresent. Christ demands, and receives, divine honour which belongs exclusively to God; hence he is one unitedly with God the Father.

It may be said, if Christ is truly and properly God, it is nothing but reasonable to suppose and expect that *incommunicable divine perfections* are attributed to him in Scripture. Certainly ; and if we carefully examine the Word of God, we shall find this to be the case.

1. *Eternity* and *Immutability* are attributed to the Saviour. The prophet Micah (v. 2), predicting the birth of Christ, says: " But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, *from everlasting.*" That this prediction refers to Christ, and to no other person, will appear evident, if we turn to Matt. ii. 5—6: When Herod the king demanded of the priests and scribes where Christ should be born, " They said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet, ' And thou, Bethlehem, *in* the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.'"

It is here asserted by the prophet, that the goings forth of the person who should be born in Bethlehem, namely Jesus Christ, "have been from everlasting," or, according to the marginal reading, from "the days of eternity." In Heb. i. 10, 11, these perfections are applied to the Son of God: "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands; they shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail;" also in ch. xiii. 8, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." And when the Saviour appeared to St. John on the Isle of Patmos, he said: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." (Rev. i. 8.) Christ is therefore identical with the *Eternal One*.

2. *Omnipotence* is attributed to Jesus Christ. In the verse just cited he declares himself to be "the Almighty." *Origen* comments on this verse in the following manner: "And that thou mayest know the omnipotence of the Father and the Son to be one and the same, hear John speaking in the Revelation in this manner: 'These things saith the Lord God, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty;' for who is the Almighty to come, except Christ?" *Origen* evidently supposes "the Almighty" to come, to have reference to the coming of Christ to judgment. In Psalm xlv. this power is evidently attributed to Christ; hence, "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy

majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously," &c. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." As Dr. Dwight very properly remarks on this passage, "He who is most mighty must be almighty." In Isa. ix. 6, he is emphatically styled "The mighty God;" and when Jesus commissioned his disciples to go and preach to all nations, he said unto them: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." As God he had this power from eternity, but in relation to his Mediatorial economy, it is said to be given him. As Dr. Pye Smith remarks: "The declaration implies that he had the capacity to receive all authority and to exercise it." In the epistle to the Hebrews (i. 3) this almighty power is predicated of the Son of God: "He upholdeth all things by the word of his power;" that is, he sustains all things, visible and invisible, in being by his own almighty power. And St. Paul, in his epistle to the Colossians (i. 14-20) speaks to the same effect. Referring to God's "*dear Son*," he says: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature: for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased *the Father* that in him should all fulness dwell." These passages are sufficient to show that Christ is spoken of in Scripture as possessing almighty power. The miracles which he performed

are also manifestations of his almighty power; for no power inferior to Omnipotence could overrule the laws of nature in the way which Christ did on various occasions.

3. *Omniscience* is also ascribed to Christ. Peter said unto him: "Lord, thou knowest all things." To this ascription of omniscience the Saviour made no reply; by which he tacitly admitted the correctness of the assertion. (John xxi. 17.) If St. Peter had ascribed this perfection to the Saviour in error, Christ would most assuredly have corrected him; and we have no reason to suppose that the apostle used this expression in a hyperbolical sense, simply to denote his extensive knowledge, but in a sense to denote his fulness of knowledge, or the infinitude of his wisdom. In John ii. 23—25, his all comprehensive knowledge is set forth thus: "Now when he (Jesus) was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast *day*, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all *men*, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man." He who can search the heart of man must be infinite in knowledge; and in many places Christ is spoken of as knowing the hearts and thoughts of men. (See Matt. ix. 4; xii. 25; Luke v. 22; vi. 8.) And in Revelations ii. 23, Christ says: "And all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts." In these passages we are furnished with conclusive proof of his Omniscience; many others might be mentioned were it needful.

4. Christ is *Omnipresent*. "For where two or three are gathered together in my name," said the Saviour, "there am I in the midst of them." Matt. xviii. 20.

And again, in ch. xxviii. 20, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you : and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world." In these passages he promises to be with his disciples, and all true worshippers, in every place wherever they are assembled, to the final consummation of time. Christians assemble for divine worship in the name of Jesus, in thousands of different places remotely distant from each other, in different regions of the globe; yet in all these distant places Christ is equally present, which is a proof of his omnipresence. To Nicodemus Christ said: "For no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, *even* the Son of man which is in heaven." John iii. 13. As though he had said, "You must rest upon the single testimony of the Son of man, who is "The Lord from heaven," who is also "*in heaven.*" This assertion clearly predicates the omnipresence of Christ; else, as Wesley very justly remarks, "he could not be in heaven and on earth at once; this is a plain instance of what is usually termed the communication of properties between the divine and human natures, whereby what is proper to the divine nature is spoken concerning the human, and what is proper to the human is, as here, spoken of the divine.

5. Another fact, which proves the Divinity and Godhead of Christ, is, *he demands and receives divine honour.* "For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them: even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all *men* should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." John v. 21. If Christ were only God by office, as asserted by the Socinians, and not



in the eternal unity of the Divine essence, and in all respects equal in Godhead to the Father, it would be improper to pay him the same honour as the Father: but "he that honoureth the Son, honoureth the Father also that sent him." We might also add, that the Redeemer in heaven is adored as the object of supreme worship. The glorified sing: "Unto him that loved us, and washed us in his own blood, be glory, and dominion, for ever and ever." And with a loud voice the redeemed multitude cry: "Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb;" while holy angels swell the chorus, saying, "Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever, Amen." Nor they alone: universal nature unites in the praise of Zion's King; for, says St. John, "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying: Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever." Rev. i. 5, 6; vii. 9—12; v. 13. We see, then, that Jesus Christ is invested with all what is most characteristic of Deity: with the names, attributes, titles, and honour, yea, with the whole glory of the Eternal Jehovah. If, therefore, he is not the Infinite and Eternal One, that is, one in essence with the uncreated Mind, the doctrine of God's unity is nothing more than an unmeaning, empty name, and the Bible, in reference to the unity of the Godhead, is a mass of confusion and self-contradiction, for there must be two Eternals, two Supremes, two Beings who claim divine honour and supreme adoration. But if

Christ is one with God, and if those who honour him, honour the Father, &c., we have no difficulty in preserving the idea of unity, while we admit a plurality of persons. If Christ is not essentially God, the doctrine taught by the prophets and apostles, and by Christ himself, goes to subvert the unity of the Godhead, and elevate a mere creature to the rank, throne, and glory of the Great Eternal. For, whatever any man may say, or however the Socinian may reason, the sacred writers, and especially the apostles, do most certainly ascribe to Christ all the perfections of Deity; and that, too, in language so clear and conclusive, that no man, unless he cultivate a wilful determination to pervert the meaning of Scripture, can misunderstand their meaning.

## ON THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

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### ARGUMENT FIFTH: ON THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST.

What a miracle is. The peculiar manner in which Christ performed his miracles. His miracles were displays of his benevolence. The miracles of Christ were wrought in confirmation of pure and holy doctrines. They were performed publicly. They were numerous. They were capable of investigation. The object of Christ in performing his miracles. The evidence we have of his miracles. The character of the Apostles who bare testimony to his miracles. They are entitled to our confidence.

If Christ is God, it is reasonable to suppose that while he was upon earth he would have given demonstrative evidence of the same in the works which he did, and in actions becoming his peculiar dignity and infinite greatness; and so he did, in the numerous and glorious miracles which he performed, which were displays of his eternal power and Godhead.

The miracles of Christ should, if we would consider them properly, be arranged in different classes, designated by different names, and separately contemplated in our minds. But, as we have no intention to enter into a minute and critical investigation of the various peculiarities of each class of miracles, we shall simply consider the nature and character of our Lord's miracles, so far as they serve to illustrate his Divinity.

What are we to understand as being meant by "a

*miracle?*" Dr. Pye Smith says: "A miracle is a sensible effect produced by the action of the Supreme Being, in some way that is out of the ordinary course of sensible operations." And this is the view, though differently expressed, generally entertained by the learned on this subject. Chalmers says: "It is an intromission of divine power;" and Vaughan: "Such a control of natural causes as bespeaks the intervention of a cause to which they are secondary."—(The "Age of Christianity," page 91.)

1. Some of Christ's miracles were of such a nature as are calculated to furnish us with the most brilliant displays of his divine and omnipotent power; as, for instance, in the case of raising the dead, expelling devils, and controlling the raging elements of nature. The manner in which the Saviour wrought these stupendous miracles, was sufficient to illustrate his almighty power and Godhead. He performed them readily and easily, and in a manner consistent with the dignity and majesty of his divine character. He employed no delusive apparatus of conjuration or necromancy to deceive the vision of spectators. There was no cumbrous and tardy machinery of falsehood and deception. His power was put forth in ready obedience to his intention, and to will was to effect. "I will, be thou clean; and immediately the leper was cleansed." "Peace, be still," and instantly the winds and waves obeyed his voice. "The sea saw him, and fled." In a moment the fury of contending elements was quelled, and the roaring waves were hushed into placid silence. To the nobleman who said, "Sir, come down ere my child die," he simply replied, "Thy son liveth;" which words operated effectually even upon the absent child. To Lazarus he simply but autho-

ritatively said, "Come forth;" and although he had been dead, and lain in the grave three days, he instantly sprang into life. This miracle confirmed, in a most striking manner, what he had previously said to Martha: "I am the resurrection and the life," &c.

2. The miracles of Christ were of the most benevolent kind, which is a further proof of his Divinity. "God is love"—"Good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works." If Christ had simply displayed a supernatural power in the performance of his miracles, unassociated with benevolence, there would have been no *moral* proof of his Deity; or in other words, no manifestation of the *moral* perfections of the divine nature. But in his miracles there were manifestations of his goodness and mercy. He might have turned rivers into blood, shut up the windows of heaven, called down fire to consume his enemies and persecutors, or commanded the earth to swallow them up alive, &c. But his wonders bore the stamp of love and mercy. They conveyed health to the sick, bread to the hungry, sight to the blind, happiness to the miserable, and life to the dead. They were strong and clear expressions of the feelings of a Being who is interested in the happiness of mankind, and beautifully harmonise with the benevolent character of the new and better dispensation. The law of Moses was an economy of threats and terror, and was therefore ushered in, on Mount Sinai, amidst the awful grandeur of thunder and lightning, blackness and darkness, and the sound of a trumpet. The gospel is a system of peace and reconciliation, and was therefore ratified by deeds of compassion and mercy. St. Paul, when contrasting the law with the gospel, shews the mildness and glory of the

latter in a manner worthy of one who had been up into the third heavens. Heb. xii. 18—24.

3. The design of Christ's miracles ought not to pass unnoticed. They were wrought in confirmation of pure and holy doctrines, which tend to promote the best interests of mankind. We see not the lying wonders of the Pagan gods, or modern imposters, performed merely to induce the credulous to become votaries to a religion which degrades and deforms the moral beauty of the mind. No; the doctrines taught by the Saviour were pure, holy, rational, and consistent with the wisdom and goodness of his divine nature. Hence our Lord, on this ground, successfully refuted the blasphemous charge of his enemies, who fain would have ascribed his miracles to the agency of Beelzebub the prince of devils. But when did the children of darkness promote the interests of light? "If Satan were divided against himself, how could his kingdom stand?" Thus the miracles of Christ derive confirmation from the beauty and sublimity of the moral system which they were intended to establish.

4. His miracles were wrought publicly, before the eyes of the multitude, and in the presence of his enemies; and they were of such a nature that they were capable of being investigated. Our blessed Saviour sought not obscurity, like the imposter who wishes to perform his dark deeds of deception in secret, in order to throw a veil of mystery around him. No; his deeds were not done in a corner. He was beheld in the city, in the fields, on the mountain top, in the temple, and on various *public occasions*. While he avoided ostentation, he courted publicity, and was seen performing his sublime and gracious miracles in the

light of the meridian sun; healing the sick, and curing all manner of diseases, in the presence of his inveterate and avowed adversaries. He did not collect around him a band of admiring friends, whose partiality might prevent the rigour of scrutiny, or induce them to extol the power of their master in undeserving praise. The spectators of Christ's miracles were not a few ignorant, credulous fanatics. They were the literati of the age—the high priest, the scribes, and the pharisees; and many of them were his bitterest enemies—men who would have proclaimed their discovery of artifice, if any could have been detected. But, his enemies themselves being judges, partial as they were, they were obliged to admit that he performed many mighty miracles. Nicodemus, who was a member of the Grand Sanhedrim, or supreme court of justice, said to the Saviour: “We know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles which thou doest, except God be with him.”

5. His miracles were numerous. His miraculous operations were not confined to a few special emergencies. The multitude of his miracles attest the exhaustless plenitude of that source from which they flowed. Not one day seems to have passed unmarked by some wonder of love, insomuch that if all his miracles were recorded, and all his sayings written down, “The world itself,” says St. John, “could not contain the books that should be written.” Though this assertion is to be understood, of course, as a hyperbole, it nevertheless conveys to our minds the idea that many of Christ's sayings and doings are not recorded.

6. His miracles were not performed in a dark age,

and among a barbarous people; but in a learned age, and amongst the most enlightened people then upon earth. Philosophy and literature were flourishing. They were not such rude and illiterate savages, as in some countries received with implicit confidence the assertions of their rulers, and bowed to them as the friends and intimates of heaven. A spirit of inquiry was generally prevalent, which would have been fatal to the deceptions of an impostor; especially so if we consider—

7. The obscure and humble condition of the Saviour, and that he never aspired to worldly greatness, or laboured to obtain notoriety. If Vespasian is said to have healed the cripple at Alexandria, there is some ground to suspect that the royal satellites were anxious to confer upon their master an unreal glory. If Mahomet, or the Pope of Rome, or the raving Mormon priest is said to perform miracles, we are not at a loss to account for his impious pretensions. In such narratives we easily trace the motives of political design, and an anxiety on the part of the impostors to obtrude themselves on the religious veneration of the ignorant. But the deeds of the lowly Jesus, whose earthly condition was that of a carpenter's son, stood forth in all the evidence of a truly Divine power—a power which could not be suspected of being exerted for selfish purposes. After worldly grandeur, worldly riches, and worldly honour, he never sought.

But it may be asked, what evidence have we that Christ did perform miracles? In answer to this question, we may safely say, that we have the strongest evidence possible. We have the agreeing testimony of the apostles of Christ, who were eye and ear witnesses of them; and



if we disbelieve their testimony, it must be because we suppose either that the apostles were deceived themselves, or that they intended to deceive others. These particulars are worthy of a moment's consideration. We observe,

1. We are told by some unbelievers, that "The apostles were illiterate, credulous men, and were deceived by their Master." Now, we think we have the strongest reason to come to a different conclusion; that is, that they were not deceived. We are bound to give them credit for being competent judges of matters of fact. Though they were not learned doctors of the law, though they had not reaped the advantages of a refined education, their general conduct, and especially their writings, shew that they were not credulous fanatics, but men of sound minds and of superior intellect to many, consequently fully competent to judge on matters of this nature. And what do they say? "We declare unto you that which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, and our hands have handled." As they attended their Divine Master daily, they must have detected imposition, if it existed. Falsehood will occasionally drop the mask. It is the character of truth alone to be firm and consistent. The imposition of all who have pretended to work miracles without divine sanction or authority, have sooner or later been exposed, and generally by their confidentials. Besides, after the ascension of Christ, the apostles found a miraculous power conferred upon them; and therefore, though we were to grant that they had been imposed upon by their Master, they could not have imposed upon themselves, and under the influence of that imposition, performed signs and wonders in the *name of Jesus*—"Through faith in his name."

2. Some infidels condemn the apostles as *co-deceivers* with their Leader. But this charge is amply refuted by that air of candour, simplicity, and truthfulness, which evidently pervades and characterises the whole of the evangelical writings. Consider the purity and spirituality of the gospel narratives, and say whether it is likely that liars and impostors could have laboured as did the writers of those narratives, in the cause of truth, of virtue, and of disinterested benevolence. Is it probable, or even possible, that so many persons should resolutely persist in asserting a lie?—that they should undergo scorn and poverty, contempt and persecution, and for what? Why, for the mere sport of imposing upon a few credulous converts. Had they, like many modern impostors, spoiled their converts of their wealth, indulged in debauchery, recommended polygamy, employed the sword, committed murder and robbery, it would be our duty to reject them as arrant impostors. But no man who has any regard either for truth or his own credit, will ever lay this charge against the *holy apostles*. They uniformly behaved themselves justly and unblamably. Even Tacitus, the Roman historian, says: “They were men of rigid morals.” Is it likely that persons of their humble rank and condition in life could have succeeded in the immense enterprise of imposing upon an age distinguished for its learning and love of research?—that they could have baffled the united powers of priests and philosophers, together with the magistrates and rulers? Besides, the fidelity of their reports is confirmed by many Jewish writers and heathen historians, who acknowledge that Jesus Christ wrought many miracles. And that this miraculous power was transmitted to the

immediate successors of Christ, was a fact so notorious, that we are told that Tertullian, a celebrated Carthaginian Christian, who flourished in the second century, solemnly challenged his heathen adversaries to settle the question between them on this issue. We therefore venture to conclude, that we have the most satisfactory evidence that Jesus Christ did perform many mighty miracles, and that they were of such a nature, and performed in such a manner, as to prove his Supreme Divinity.

## ON THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

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### ARGUMENT SIXTH: ON THE DEATH, RESURRECTION, AND ASCENSION OF CHRIST.

Christ in Gethsemane. He dies on the cross. His promise to the dying thief. The soldiers pierced his side after he was dead. He is buried and secured in the tomb; the military guard keeping the sepulchre. His resurrection. Shows himself to his disciples several times. Christ and his disciples on Mount Bethany. Scenes and reflections. He majestically ascends through the air. He is seated at the right hand of God the Father.

In following the blessed Redeemer from Gethsemane to Bethany, we meet with many facts which not only prove his superhumanity, but demonstrate his Supreme Divinity. Behold the glorious sufferer when apprehended by a troop of soldiers and officers; with a word he smote them to the ground, as if smitten with a sudden flash of lightning. As soon as he said unto them, *I am he*, they went backward and fell to the ground, which was a proof that, had he seen it proper, he could have laid them for ever silent in death: "But he came not to destroy life but to save." When he hung upon the cross, above was a veiled sun and a darkened heaven; beneath was a trembling earth. When he groaned, even inanimate nature seemed to sympathise with her suffering Creator and Lord. The rocks rent:—

“ And the sun refused to shine,  
While his majesty Divine,  
Was derided, insulted and slain.”

But in the midst of this darkness, disorder, and terror, a light gleamed into his soul, and into the soul of the penitent malefactor. Just before the blessed Redeemer bowed his sacred head and died, he gave utterance to that life-giving promise, which to the expiring malefactor was worth ten thousand worlds : “ To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” When he uttered these words, his soul was plunged into the depths of his sacrificial sufferings. Then he hung in mortal agony, in darkness, shame, and dying anguish, on the ignominious cross ; He endured the pain and ignominy of an accursed death : He despised the shame, for the joy that was set before him : He looked beyond the bloody baptism, the pains of death, and the howling tempests of a broken law, to the peaceful regions of heavenly day, to the paradise of uninterrupted repose : and he knew that ere the close of that troubled day, both he and the penitent thief should there meet together under a brighter sky, beyond the reach of malice and suffering, and should be surrounded by a superior order of beings, where all is love and glory. “ To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” “ *The Lord from heaven*” was about to return to heaven again, and as a proof that the joys of heaven were at his command, he assured the expiring malefactor that he would give him a place in the regions of rest and glory.

“ But lo ! the friend of sinners dies.”

The functions of life cease to perform their wonted

operations. That marred visage is pale with death. The soldiers break the legs of the two malefactors ; but when they come to Christ they find he is dead already : “ Not a bone of him shall be broken.” One of the soldiers pierces his side, and as the glittering blade is drawn from the wound which it had inflicted, there follows an effusion of blood and water : “ But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water.” “ *And they shall look on him whom they pierced.*” “ Now it is finished.” The Prince of life and glory is crucified. The Saviour is dead, cold and motionless. His friends and his enemies all look on his languid form, and they pronounce him *dead*. The burning sword of justice has smitten Jehovah’s fellow, and the sheep are scattered. The Bright and Morning Star has set in blood. The Sun of Righteousness is enveloped in gloom and darkness. The Hope of Israel slumbers in death. This event, to the followers of Christ, was a mournful one. He was taken from the cross, and laid in the grave. The mouth of the hallowed sepulchre was closed with a ponderous stone, sealed with an imperial seal, and guarded by a military watch, lest his disciples should come by night and steal him away.

He is secure now, say his enemies : “ He saved others ; himself he cannot save.” “ The deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days, I will rise again.” But his imposition will soon be made manifest. The first watch of the night passes over ; all is calm and silent ; nothing is seen but the military guard in martial pride and dread array. The moon-light gleams on their burnished helmets and weapons of steel. Nothing is heard

with the powers of hell, "His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." And thence could be seen the great, doomed city, once the glory of the earth, but now, on account of her impiety, sentenced to ruin and final destruction. Over it the Saviour wept while he pronounced its eternal fate, saying: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day (of visitation,) the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes."

There was the temple standing in all its majestic grandeur, apparently firm as the everlasting hills; but the day was approaching when the enemy should lay its glory in the dust, rase its foundations, so that there should not be one stone left upon another; because its guilty worshippers rejected the Prince of life and glory. And from this place could be seen Calvary, the scene of his mortal conflict, the mount on which he died, the theatre where the great battle was fought, when all the powers of hell were brought into the field to wage war with Him—the King of Glory. There the Captain of our Salvation met the infernal tyrant and his martial hosts single handed, and won the glorious victory. He died; but he died in conquest, and speedily rose in triumph and glory, to die no more. The fiery conflict is now over. The devil and his legions are defeated. Man is redeemed by the right hand and stretched out arm of the *incarnate Jehovah*. "His holy

arm hath gotten him the victory." And now he stands on the hill of Bethany, conqueror of the world, of sin, of death, and of him who had the power of death, that is the devil. He hath taken the keys of death and of hell, and suspended them from his girdle. He died, but is alive again, and will live for evermore. There he stands in omnipotent strength and glorious majesty! His enemies are become his footstool. Heaven, and glory, and immortality are in prospect. Above the starry regions he sees the pearly gates of the eternal city opened wide, cherubic legions, and "ranks of shining thrones," stand ready to "shout him welcome to the skies."

His disciples are standing round him—

"—Wondering how and where at length,  
The mystic scene will end."

He raises his hands—those hands once nailed to the cross, where still are seen those "glorious scars." With his dying breath he had prayed for his murderers, and now that he is about to ascend to glory, he blesses his disciples; and in the act of blessing, he gradually rises from the earth. The law of gravitation, which binds all heavy bodies to the earth, at his supreme command loses its attractive power, and he continues to ascend above the highest trees and the cloud-capt mountains. The eyes of the disciples are still fixed upon him. There is no whirlwind, or flaming chariot wafted by horses of fire, to transport him through the aerial regions:—no flashes of lightning or heavy peals of thunder to give solemnity and grandeur to the scene. All appears calm and silent. And by *his own omnipotent power* he majestically rises higher and higher, till he ultimately disappears. The everlasting



gates are opened wide : The King of Glory, the Lord of hosts, triumphantly enters the heavenly Jerusalem, while angelic millions ascribe unto him honour, and glory, and majesty, and power, and dominion, for ever and ever. And, rising superior to all the heavenly hosts, he takes his seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high ; and now he appears in the presence of God for us. “ When the Son of God had by himself purged our sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.” And he is an high priest for ever, having an unchangeable priesthood : “ Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him.” To his disciples and followers, who stood looking up in astonishment, a voice distinctly articulated, “ Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven ? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” That is, when he comes to judge the world in righteousness, his appearance will be visible and glorious.

In the six foregoing arguments, taken either separately or unitedly, we are furnished with ample proof of the correctness of our leading proposition ; namely, that Jesus Christ is truly Divine, and has an eternal union with God the Father. It may be thought by some of our readers that so many arguments on this subject are superfluous, but it should be borne in mind that it is a doctrine of vast importance. The Divinity of Christ lies at the foundation of all true faith, and therefore should be made as plain and as perspicuous as possible ; and on this head the holy Scriptures abound with ample and multifarious evidence.

## IX. ON THE SONSHIP OF CHRIST.

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Various opinions on this subject. Dr. A. Clarke on Luke i. 35. Strictures on Dr. Clarke's opinion by several Wesleyan ministers. Observations on their strictures. Mr. Wesley on Heb. i. 5. Armenian Magazine. Dr. Clarke's remarks on Wesley's opinion. Imperial Magazine admits of discussion on this question. The Eternal Sonship is a philological question, rather than doctrinal. Albert Barnes on several passages which relate to the Sonship of Christ. The phrase *Son of God* refers to his human and divine natures, unitedly considered. Remarks on Mr. Benson's comment on Heb. i. 2. Dr. Pye Smith on the Sonship. Summing up of the arguments, and conclusion. Treffry on the Sonship.

CHRIST is expressly designated "*The Son of God*" upwards of forty times in the New Testament; and in many other places there are expressions of similar import, such as the Father calling him "My Son." But I have not incorporated this title given to the Saviour with those facts and arguments adduced in proof of the Divinity of Christ, because it is a disputed question amongst those who believe in the Deity of the Saviour, and who hold that he is the second person in the Holy Trinity, whether the appellation, or phrase "*Son of God*," relates to his Divinity or his humanity, or to both. Men of profound literary attainments, distinguished for their theological research and biblical knowledge, have differed materially in reference to the precise signification of the phrase "Son of God," and in what sense it is applicable to the Saviour of

the world. Some suppose that it expressly denotes and sets forth his divine nature, and is used in contradistinction to the phrase, "Son of man," which sets forth his human nature; others say it can only with safety and propriety be applied to his human nature; while others argue that it denotes and implies his divine nature exclusively, when in connection with his humanity; others again are of opinion that it applies to both his humanity and Divinity, but to neither of them separately considered. Dr. A. Clarke expresses his opinion very clearly and explicitly on this subject, in his notes on Luke i. 35, in the following language:—

"Here, I trust, I may be permitted to say, with all due respect to those who differ from me, that the doctrine of the *eternal Sonship* is, in my opinion, anti-scriptural, and highly dangerous. This doctrine I reject for the following reasons:—

"1st. I have not been able to find any *express* declaration in the Scriptures concerning it.

"2dly. If Christ be the Son of God, as to his *divine* nature, then he cannot be *eternal*; for *son* implies *father*; and *father* implies, in reference to *son*, *precedency* in *time*, if not in *nature* too. *Father* and *son* imply the idea of *generation*, and *generation* implies a *time* in which it *was* effected, and *time* also *antecedent* to such generation.

"3dly. If Christ be the *Son* of God, as to his *divine* nature, then the *Father* is of necessity prior, consequently superior, to him.

"4thly. Again, if this *divine nature* were *begotten* of the *Father*, then it must be in *time*; i.e. there was a period in which it *did not* exist, and a period when it *began* to

exist; this destroys the *eternity* of our blessed Lord, and robs him at once of his Godhead.

“ 5thly. To say that he was *begotten* from all *eternity*, is, in my opinion *absurd*, and the phrase “ *eternal Son*,” is a positive self-contradiction. Eternity is that which has had no beginning, nor stands in any reference to TIME; Son supposes *time*, *generation*, and *father*, and time also *antecedent* to such generation. Therefore the conjunction of these two terms, *son* and *eternity*, is absolutely impossible, as they imply essentially different and *opposite* ideas. This doctrine of the *eternal Sonship* destroys the *Deity* of Christ; now, if his Deity be taken away, the whole gospel scheme of redemption is ruined. On this ground, the atonement of Christ cannot have been of *infinite* merit, and consequently could not purchase pardon for the offences of mankind, nor give any right to, or possession of, an *eternal* glory. The very use of this phrase is both absurd and dangerous; therefore, let all those who value *Jesus* and their *salvation* abide by the Scriptures.

“ This doctrine of the *eternal Sonship*, as it has been lately explained in many a pamphlet, and many a paper in magazines, I must and do consider as an awful heresy, and sheer *Arianism*; which, in many cases, has terminated in *Socinianism*, and that again in *Deism*. From such heterodoxies and their abettors, may God save his Church! Amen.”

After reading the above quotation, there can be no misunderstanding as to Dr. Clarke's opinion on this important subject. But whether his illustrations and deductions are equally clear and conclusive, is not so readily admitted. Several eminent Wesleyan ministers severely

criticised, and strongly animadverted on, the Doctor's opinions, and their strictures appeared in the *Wesleyan Magazine*, edited by the able hand of the Rev. J. Benson. Among those who offered strictures on the peculiar notions of Dr. Clarke, may be mentioned the Rev. H. Moore, the Rev. Messrs. Watson, West, and Boyd. These gentlemen condemned the notions of the Doctor in his own language, as being "anti-scriptural and dangerous." Clarke took but little notice of these strictures; but they were somewhat severely handled by one Mr. Brunskill, a local preacher, who was a man of some ability and literary research. Some of their critical remarks, on both sides of the question, are valuable and interesting, while others are absurd, and approach the contemptible.

In 1820, we find the subject was discussed in the *Imperial Magazine*, (vol. II.) A person who signed himself *Tyro*, wrote in favour of the doctrine of the eternal Sonship, and in my opinion it is one of the best articles ever written on that side of the question. The editor, Mr. Drew, treated the subject as a purely philological question, and very seasonably reproved some who wrote on it for making it a matter of doctrine, and regarding it as affecting the Divinity of Christ, and the doctrine of the Trinity.

The Rev. J. T. Miller, in his, "*Epitome of Christian Theology*," page 101, in defending the doctrine of the eternal Sonship, contends, that with as much propriety we might object to the eternity of the word as the eternity of the Sonship. He asks: "Can the declaration or expression of the mind be as old as the mind that gave it birth? for the word implies a speaker, who in reference to time implies precedence, and the speaker being prior must be

superior," &c. It is rather surprising that a respectable author like Mr. Miller should so unguardedly confound the *personal Word* of the Trinity with *a word spoken*, which is a mere effusion of the mind expressed by articulation. THE WORD that was with God in the beginning, and which *was God*, the maker of all things, was not a mere "declaration or expression of the mind" of God, but a distinct person in unity with the Father and the Holy Ghost, possessing all the attributes and perfections of Deity; and therefore, to confound this Divine Person with "a declaration or expression of mind," is erroneous and unsound theology. His remarks on "The express image of his person" are liable to similar objections. Hence, Mr. Miller's analogical reasonings, founded on the above passages, do nothing towards proving the eternity of the Sonship of Christ. He next appeals to the commentary and poetry of Mr. Wesley; and if Mr. Wesley's theology and hymns were uniformly and infallibly true, the matter might soon be decided in favour of the eternal Sonship. But Mr. Wesley, though a great and good man, was liable to err in judgment. And it is rather remarkable that both parties appeal to the writings of Mr. Wesley, in confirmation of their notions and sentiments, though it is sufficiently clear, to any person conversant with Mr. Wesley's writings, that he held the doctrine of the eternal Sonship; but sometimes he did not write sufficiently clear, so as to be distinctly understood.

In his note on Heb. i. 5, he gives us the following paraphrase: "Thou art my son, God of God, Light of light; *this day have I begotten thee*—I have begotten thee from eternity; which, by its unalterable permanency of

duration, is one continued, unsuccessive day." This of course most clearly imports the doctrine of the eternal Sonship. But, compare this with the Armenian Magazine for 1781, page 384, of which he was the editor. I refer to the article entitled "An Arian Antidote." In it we find the following sentence: "Greater or lesser in infinity, is not; inferior Godhead shocks our senses; Jesus was inferior to the Father as touching his *manhood* (John xiv. 28), *he was a son given*, &c. But our Redeemer from everlasting (Isaiah lxiii. 16) had not the *inferior name of Son*—'In the beginning was the Word,' &c. This, Dr. Clarke maintains, is clearly against the notion of eternal Sonship, and argues that, whether or not Mr. Wesley was the author of that article—as sole editor of the Magazine, and having full power to admit or reject the insertion of articles sent to him for publication, and having carefully corrected the above Magazine subsequently to its publication, (for republication)—he must have approved of the sentiments contained therein. And it is worthy of our attention, that Mr. Wesley, in his fourth volume of Journals, remarks: "This week I have endeavoured to point out *all the errors* in the eight vols. of the Armenian Magazine. This must be done by me, otherwise several passages therein will be unintelligible." But, after all, as Mr. Wesley was so much engaged on so vast a variety of subjects, and when we consider that he only allowed himself a week to correct eight volumes, notwithstanding his superior abilities, the particular sentiments contained in the "Arian Antidote" might have escaped his notice and correction. It may be proper here distinctly to notice what was stated by Mr. Drew; namely, that the real and specific subject of debate

can scarcely be said to be on any point of doctrine : “ It is nothing more than a mere philological question, whether it be proper or improper to use jointly two words in reference to Christ, namely, ‘ eternal Son.’ For both those who approve of the expression, and those who disapprove of it, admit the supreme Divinity of the Saviour, and that it is right to call him ‘ The Son of God.’ They simply differ as to the ground on which they conceive it can be rendered most secure and tenable against the attacks of those who would gladly undermine the foundation on which it stands.”

On this subject Albert Barnes, in his notes on Romans xiv., has made some very judicious remarks. He says : “ The phrase *Son of God* stands in contrast with the title *son of man* ; and the natural and obvious import of that is, that he was *a man* ; so the natural and obvious import of the title *Son of God* is, that he was divine ; or that he sustained relations to God, designated by the name SON OF GOD, corresponding to the relations which he sustained to man, designated by the name SON OF MAN. The natural idea of the term Son of God, therefore, is, that he sustained a relation to God in his nature which implied more than was human or angelic ; which implied *equality* with God. Accordingly, this idea was naturally suggested to the Jew, by his calling God his Father. John v. 18. ‘ But said also, that God was his Father, *making himself equal with God* ; and this idea Jesus immediately proceeded to confirm.’ ” See John v. 19—30 ; x. 29—36 ; Col. i. 19 ; Phill. ii. 2—11 ; Heb. i. 2, 10—12 ; John xiv. 9—23 ; and Rev. v. 13, 14.

It is not affirmed that this title was given to the



second person of the Trinity before he became *incarnate*, or to suggest the idea of any derivation or extraction before he was made flesh. There is no instance in which the appellation is not conferred to express his relation *after* he assumed human flesh. Of any derivation from God, or emanation from him in eternity, the Scriptures are silent. The title is conferred on him, it is supposed, with reference to his condition in this world, "*as the Messiah.*" This title is employed—

1. To denote his humanity and supreme Divinity conjointly. Christ the Messiah, the Saviour of the world, was not *merely* the Son of man, but, God being in the Son of man, he was also, in a peculiar sense, IN RELATION TO HIS TWOFOLD NATURE, THE SON OF GOD. The following passages evidently import this meaning: Psalm lxxxii. 6; Matt. xvi. 16; Mark xvi. 6; Luke ii. 70; John i. 34; and Acts ix. 20.

2. It was conferred on him to designate the immediate agency of the Holy Ghost in his miraculous conception. Luke i. 35. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the *Son of God.*" That holy thing which was born of the blessed Virgin was Jesus Christ, Emmanuel, the true Messiah, the Saviour of the world; the title comprehending both his human and divine nature. Hence, the apostle says: "When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, *made of a woman*, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Those who maintain that the title, "*Son of God,*" applies exclusively to the Divinity of Christ, lay peculiar stress on the

word *sent*, which they argue implies pre-existence ; and those who contend that the phrase, " Son of God," means his human nature, say that, as the Son of God was "*made of a woman*," it must refer particularly to his human nature. But is it not more reasonable, and more in accordance with the evident meaning of the text, to suppose that it refers to both his human and divine natures unitedly ? The Son *sent*, was "*made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem us*." And Christ, in his twofold nature, redeemed us. It was neither his humanity nor his divinity, separately considered, but his divine nature being joined to, or united with, his holy and suffering humanity, which redeemed and saved us from the curse of the law. And the same mode of reasoning will hold good when applied to John iii. 16, 17 : " God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son," . . . " that the world through him might be saved."

We are saved by his humanity and Divinity jointly. Take either away, then the sacrifice and the atonement are incomplete. Humanity had offended, and humanity must suffer and atone. But humanity *alone* cannot atone. The Son of God, being supremely divine as well as human, can offer a perfectly satisfactory oblation, and atone for "and save to the uttermost, all who come unto God by him." " God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself."

Take another passage (Heb. i. 2), on which Mr. Benson remarks : " We have the most clear and decisive proof from Scripture of Christ being a Son before his incarnation." " God, who in these last times hath spoken to us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by

whom also he made the worlds." If we insist that this passage relates exclusively to the Deity of Christ, those who hold the opposite opinion reply, "The eternal Son cannot be heir; for he made all things, and possesses all things, even from eternity itself, where all things are complete; and consequently there can be no heirship; for to appoint him to be heir, or to make him an heir, in reference to his Divine Nature, disrobes him of his supreme Divinity, and degrades him to a creature," &c. But, on the other hand, great stress is laid on the phrase, "By whom also he made the worlds." Now, he who made the worlds, was the WORD or LOGOS, "who was with God, and who was God;" and this Divine Word, who made the worlds, is here called the Son, that is God's Son; consequently the divine, as well as the human nature, must be implied in the phrase "his Son," by whom also he made the worlds. Taking this view of the subject, and uniting the 1st chapter of John with the 1st chapter of Hebrews, thus comparing Scripture with Scripture, to come at the true meaning, we may safely come to the following conclusion: The Divine Word was from eternity, and that Word, in the fulness of time, "was made flesh," and when Divinity and humanity were united, the Son of God, in his twofold nature and mediatorial capacity, was "appointed heir of all things." The Divine Word, who was properly God from Eternity, is now, in his complex nature, *Son and heir*. This mode of explanation involves in it no contradiction, and is in perfect harmony with the views which both parties entertain in reference to the true Divinity of the Saviour. On the other hand, sometimes the phrase "Son of man" refers to his Divinity. Hence we

read of "the Son of man which is in heaven." When Christ spoke these words, we know that his humanity was not in heaven, for he was not yet glorified; but in reference to his divine nature he was in heaven; as God, he was present everywhere. Again, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Here both his divine and human Sonship are implied, for both are engaged to seek and save the sinner. And I think it will be found, that according to the rules of biblical criticism, the greater number, if not all, of those passages in which the phrase "Son of God" occurs, this mode of explanation may be safely applied; whereas, on the other hand, if you limit the meaning to either the divine or human nature of Christ, it will be found attended with considerable difficulty. That in some cases it refers to his Divinity exclusively, we do not deny; that is, if taken literally.

In Dr. Clarke's writings we meet with several passages where he uses the phrase, "Son of God," and, "God the Son," in reference to his divine nature, and this must imply, either the eternal Sonship, or that it was an appellation given to his divine nature, when it become connected with humanity. In neither case does it apply to his humanity alone. These are the Doctor's expressions, in his "Christian Theology," (by S. Dunn, page 87): "In God there are found three persons, God the Father, *God the Son*, and God the Holy Ghost." And in page 89 of the same work he says: "May *God the Son* dwell in my heart." And in page 436 he says, "In due time the Divine Logos, called afterwards Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, the Son of God," &c. In the first of these passages, where he says,

“In God there are three persons,” and one of these persons is “God the Son;” and in the other passage where he prays for “God the Son” to dwell in his heart, he must refer to the Divinity of Christ, as being one with the Holy Ghost: and in the last quotation, where he says “the Divine Logos was afterwards called ‘the Son of God,’” he seems to refer to the person of Christ, including both his human and Divine nature. And in thus expressing himself he was not singular; most evangelical theologians have used similar expressions, which, as we have proved, are in accordance with Scripture. Dr Wardlaw says: “Jesus Christ is truly God and truly man, and is called the Son of God on account of the divinely effected constitution of His mediatorial person, as *Emmanuel*, which is a sense of the designation in which it can never belong to any other than Himself.” (Wardlaw’s Systematic Theology, vol. II. page 59. See also page 42 to 46 of the same vol.) Dr. Leonard Woods, Professor of Christian Theology, holds the same opinion. (See his Theological Works, vol. I. page 400 to 412); and Dr. Chalmers, in his Institutes, seems to maintain the same notion. I will conclude this article with a few extracts from Dr. Pye Smith’s “First Lines on Theology,” which, in my opinion, are worthy of the attention of every theological student. “It is obvious that this term, *the eternal generation of the Son*, is nothing but a human, imperfect, figurative expression, not to be understood in a physical sense, but only as an analogical term to denote *that* which *must* be necessarily *unknown*; viz. the *mode* in which the Son is possessed of the Divine nature, and which implies identity of nature with a numerical difference. The proof of this doctrine

arises from the numerous passages in which Divine attributives are ascribed to Christ *As the Son.*—"Objection: The term generation necessarily implies a *beginning* and dependence of existence; and that he who begetteth is *prior* in the order of time to him who is begotten." Here the Doctor evidently refers to the notions held, and the objections to the eternal Sonship made, by Dr. Clarke, or to such individuals as embraced his peculiar notions. This objection Dr. Pye Smith answers in the following manner: "Reply: The term is used in a metaphorical or analogical sense only; and with a protest against its being understood literally, physically, or according to the nature and necessity when used in relation to imperfect created beings. The expression used by many of the old divines, on being closely considered, appears to me to be unexceptionable, to convey the truth reverentially and scripturally; *communicatio totius Essentiæ Divinæ.*" Here follows a number of quotations from Greek and Latin authors, which the classical scholar may consult if he think proper so to do. (F. L. of Theology, p. 272.)

Again, in page 259 of the same work, he says, in his recapitulation: "It appears from the citations under this head, that the title, *SON OF GOD*, is, in a peculiar sense, the appellation of the Messiah: on account of the preternatural formation of his human nature, and his office as the representative, to the Church, of the dominion and grace of the Father; but also importing a dignity possessed by *no other* being—superior to that of the highest order of created intelligences—completely known and understood only by the Divine Mind, and in that respect on a par with the nature of the Father—possessing a perfect intimacy with

the nature, attributes, and counsels of the Father—performing the same acts as the Father, and in the same way—claiming the same honours—possessing irresistible power. . . . The person called the Son of God is represented as having an existence before appearing in the nature of man—as possessing identity of nature with the Father,” &c. But the same author says, in page 258 of the same work, “The term *Son* includes the nature that could suffer, along with the circumstance which gave value to his sufferings;” in proof of which we would refer the reader to the following passages :—Heb. vi. 6 : “Seeing they crucified to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame;” and chap. x. 29 : “Who hath trodden underfoot the Son of God,” &c.; and 1 John i. 7 : “The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth from all sin.” If the term, “Son of God,” “includes the nature that could suffer,” and bleed, and die, of course it includes his humanity, along with his Divinity. And this conclusion appears to be scriptural, and most in harmony with the sense in which many of the most learned and sound divines, both ancient and modern, have used the expression. And, in fact, if viewed as relating to either his Divinity or humanity restrictively, it would necessarily lead to the conclusion, that there are two persons in the Messiah; viz. “the Son of God” and “the son of man;” or, in other words, that his Divine nature constituted distinctly “the Son of God,” and his human nature “the son of man.” But Christ, the Saviour of the world, who was God from eternity, and man in the fulness of time, is only *one Person*, and that person in Scripture is called “Jesus, Emmanuel or God with us, Christ the Lord, Messiah, the Saviour,

the Son of God, the Son of man," &c. All these appellations refer to that "Holy Thing," or person, (including all his attributes, human and divine) that was born of the blessed Virgin, and in due time his humanity died for the ungodly. And surely *this person was "the Son of God."* Controversial remarks and exegetical observations on this subject might be lenthened out to almost any extent; but I leave the reader now to reason and judge for himself. The expression is evidently used in various senses; the intelligent reader will generally understand its meaning, by a careful consideration of the text or context in which the phrase occurs. Those who wish to study the doctrine of the Sonship thoroughly, should read a work published on this subject by the Rev. R. Treffry, jun. Though it may be considered to contain much irrelevant and extraneous matter, it is nevertheless a work of great importance to every theological student. The author advocates what is termed "the doctrine of the *Eternal Sonship*;" viz. that the Redeemer had a divine sonship, and that the title, "*Son of God*," belongs to the divine nature of Christ exclusively. In order to prove this, he has recourse to almost every argument which can be brought to bear on the subject. Though I cannot endorse all his sentiments, or see into the conclusiveness of all his arguments, I regard his work as an able production. It is elaborate, critical, and profound; and above all I admire the respectful manner in which he treats those who think differently from himself. I strongly recommend the reading of this book to all who are seeking information on the subject. If they cannot fully coincide with all the views contained therein, they will find much to admire, and meet with



much calculated to instruct. See also Dr. Payne's "Theological Lecture on the Sonship." He holds the views advocated in this dissertation, and shews that they are embraced and advocated by many distinguished and learned divines.

## X. ON THE HOLY SPIRIT.

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The personality of the Holy Spirit generally believed. The Holy Spirit is one person in the Godhead; consequently supremely Divine:—this proved from various passages of Scripture. The personal pronoun employed by Christ in speaking of the Holy Spirit. The personal office of an Intercessor is ascribed to him. The distinct appearance of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Spirit is spoken of as performing a multitude of personal acts. The Holy Spirit is equal in power and glory with the Father and the Son, and is identified with them in Scripture. The Holy Spirit is worshipped as God.

In the eternal Godhead there is a triplicity of persons, (a subject which we shall consider in the next essay,) and one of these Divine persons is designated “The Holy Ghost,” or “The Holy Spirit.” Some professing Christians do not believe in the Trinity of the Godhead, or in the personality of the Divine Spirit, among whom might be mentioned a number of learned authors. But Christians generally, whether belonging to the Armenians, Greeks, Romans, or the various Protestant churches, believe in the personality of the Holy Ghost. This person, by way of distinction, is called, by the unanimous consent of Christendom, “The third person in the Trinity.” I shall—

First, endeavour to shew that the Holy Spirit is a real and distinct person, possessing the same attributes and

perfections as the Father and the Son, and that consequently He is supremely Divine. By a *real person*, in reference to the Holy Spirit, I do not mean a *separate* individual Being, or a Being existing apart from the Father and the Son, but a spiritual, rational, and intelligent nature, existing in eternal union with the Divine Mind. In confirmation of this grand and glorious truth, we shall appeal, not to human authority, but to the infallible Word of God.

1. He is spoken of as a personal agent, possessing a rational understanding and will. St. Paul, in his 1st epistle to the Corinthians (ii. 10, 11,) when speaking of the incomprehensible mysteries of the kingdom of grace, says: "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." From this passage we conclude that, as the spirit of man is one with man, and knoweth what is in man, so the Spirit of God is one with God, and therefore "knoweth the deep things of God." In the same epistle, chapter xii. 11, he says, when speaking of the nature of spiritual gifts: "All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as *he will*." Hence, as a person, he has a will, and power to bestow gifts.

In chapter xv. 13—19 of the epistle to the Romans, the attribute of *power* is ascribed to the Holy Ghost: "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through

the *power* of the Holy Ghost,"—"Through mighty signs and wonders, by the *power* of the Spirit of God."

2. The Holy Spirit is spoken of by Christ as a real person, by the use of the personal pronoun in reference to Him. John xv. 26 : "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, *he* shall testify of me ;" and again, in chapter xvi. 13, 14, "Howbeit, when *he*, the Spirit of truth, is come, *he* will guide you into all truth ;" "and *he* will shew you things to come. *He* shall glorify me, for *he* shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." In these passages the Holy Spirit is spoken of, not as a divine influence, or power, or grace, but a distinct person, performing certain acts characteristic of actual personality.

3. The personal office of an Intercessor is ascribed to him. Rom. viii. 26 : "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities ; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself (**HIMSELF**) maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." It is also said, in the same chapter, that "the Spirit itself (**HIMSELF**) beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

4. The distinct appearance of the Holy Spirit under the emblem of a dove, at the time of our Saviour's baptism, proves his personality : "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water : and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him ; and, lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Matt. iii. 16, 17. It is

worthy of remark, that St. Luke says the Spirit descended in a *bodily shape*, which directly points out the distinct personality of the Holy Spirit, who is thus distinguished from Christ, who was coming up out of the water; and from the Father, represented by the voice from heaven, "saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

5. The Holy Spirit is represented as performing a great multitude of personal acts; such as teaching, speaking, witnessing, and performing miracles. See John xiv. 26; xvi. 13; Acts xx. 23; Rom. viii. 15, 16; 1 Cor. xii. 4—11, &c. The Spirit also quickeneth and giveth life to the dead. John vi. 63: "It is the Spirit that quickeneth." And even the resurrection of Christ is attributed to the operation of the Holy Spirit. It is rather remarkable that this fact is overlooked by several eminent divines, who say, "The resurrection of Christ is nowhere attributed to the Holy Spirit," (Barnes and Witsius). But the Apostle Peter, speaking of Christ, says: "Being put to death in the flesh, but *quickeneth by the Spirit*," by which Spirit we are not to understand the human soul of Christ, (as this, in itself, possessed no quickening power), but the Holy Spirit, by which Christ preached in the person of righteous Noah to those who were disobedient in that age. 1 Peter iii. 18, 19. And St. Paul says: "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." Rom. viii. 11. Hence, the Spirit, or Holy Ghost, quickened and raised up Christ from the dead, which proves his Divinity and oneness with the Father and the Son. Since, then, the same work, on the same occasion, is ascribed to the Father,

Son, and Holy Ghost, these three persons must be the ONE God. Therefore,

6. The Holy Spirit is not merely *a person*, but a *Divine Person*, equal in power and glory with the Father and the Son. Hence, he is spoken of in the Old Testament as Lord and Jehovah. In Acts xxviii. 25, 26, St. Paul, referring to the Old Testament Scriptures, says: "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear," &c. Compare this with Isaiah vi. 8: "Also, I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me." In Hebrews iii. 7, 9, the Holy Ghost is identified with the God of Israel: "As the Holy Ghost saith, To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: when your fathers tempted *me*, proved *me*, and saw *my* works forty years; wherefore *I* was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in *their* heart; and they have not known *my* ways. So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into *my* rest."

Attributes which belong exclusively to the Most High are ascribed to the Holy Ghost; such as *Omnipotence*. Hence, we read of mighty signs and wonders being performed "by the power of the Holy Ghost." Rom. xv. 13. *Omnipresence*: "Whither shall I go from *thy Spirit*? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?" Psalm cxxxix. 7. *Omniscience*: "For the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." 1 Cor. ii. 10; and finally, the Holy Ghost is *worshipped as God*. In Isaiah vi. 3, we read that the seraphim which stood above the throne of the Most

High, cried one to another, and said, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts : the whole earth is full of his glory." And this Lord of hosts, it appears from Acts xxviii. 25, was the Holy Ghost. The voice of the Lord of hosts said to the prophet Isaiah, "Go, and tell this people, Hear ye, indeed, but understand not," &c. (v. 9.) And the Apostle, referring to this passage, says : "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand," &c. It would be superfluous to multiply quotations and arguments on this subject, especially as further evidence in confirmation of the personality and Deity of the Holy Spirit will be adduced in discussing the doctrine of the "Trinity in Unity," to which subject we shall in the next place turn our attention.

## XI. TRINITY IN UNITY.

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THE doctrine of the Trinity in Unity is a mystery which the human mind cannot fully comprehend. Observations on German Neology ; its dangerous tendency to infidelity. The folly of rejecting a doctrine on the ground of its incomprehensibility. The physical universe is incomprehensible, yet we know it exists. The word Trinity is not a biblical expression, but the doctrine is implied in several passages of Scripture. There is a plurality of persons in the Godhead. The opinions of Dr. A. Clarke and Simion Ben Joachi on the word Elohim. The pronouns *us* and *our*, as used by God, clearly express plurality. Various passages of Scripture considered. The Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son. The Son proceeds equally from the Father and the Holy Ghost. The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, have essentially the same properties and attributes ascribed to them. The Father and the Son are contained in the Holy Spirit. The *unity* of three persons in the Godhead, proved by a collation of the foregoing facts and arguments.

HAVING proved the existence of three distinct persons in the Godhead—namely, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—and that these three persons are truly and properly divine ; we shall now endeavour to shew that these three persons are one Being, or God. This we admit is an important undertaking ; but to explain it, so as to satisfy the curiosity of every sceptical and inquisitive mind, is impossible. The subject, in its mode, is incomprehensible to the human mind. It is, so far, not capable of palpable demonstration, so as to come plainly within the reach of common apprehension. It is an article of faith, not in opposition to reason, but infinitely above or beyond the grasp of reason. On this



account a class of modern divines say it ought to be rejected. Many of the theologians in Germany take this stand, and some few in England, who have studied the late productions of German authors, have embraced the same opinion. *Neology*, which simply signifies new words, or new doctrine, when rightly understood as used by the German rationalists, is sheer infidelity, or unbelief of those portions of God's Word which imply or set forth miracles—a refined philosophical system of explaining away the evident import of those Scriptural narratives, which relate to such phenomena as set forth the miraculous manifestations of divine power. Hence, whatever cannot be explained and comprehended, on what the Neologists call rational principles, they reject or disbelieve. And, as they profess to believe the Bible, their way and method of explaining many passages is most absurd and ridiculous; so incompatible with the dictates of solid sense and enlightened reason, that they appear more like freaks of sportive irony than the sober and rational interpretations of learned men. The Rev. W. Cooke, in his excellent treatise on the “Province of Reason,” &c., furnishes us with several examples of their wretched mode of explaining what are considered miraculous phenomena, selected from the works of Semler, Eichorn, Ammon, Thiess, Heinrichs, &c. These specimens of German rationalism and neological criticism, strongly remind us of the deistical and impious productions of Thomas Paine; and the sceptical sarcasms of the notorious Voltaire, whose object was to turn the Bible into burlesque and ridicule. It is affirmed by the Neologists that the passage which relates to the sublime and miraculous account of our Saviour walking on the waves of the

sea, simply signifies "that he walked through the shoals, and then swam to the ship;" and that his glorious and supernatural appearance on the mount of transfiguration was nothing but a flash of sheet lightning; and that St. Peter dreamed that he heard a voice from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son," &c. This mode of explanation, in my opinion, is nothing better than gross and barefaced infidelity—the effusion of a mind (in spiritual matters,) as dark as hell and as impious as Lucifer, evincing wilful perversions of the obvious meaning and import of the inspired Word of God—perversions which have never been outdone even by avowed Atheists, either in ancient or modern times. This German theory, therefore, though called *Neology*, or new doctrine, is substantially nothing more than ancient sceptical infidelity revived and developed in a somewhat new form, under the plausible pretext of new light and new doctrine, so as to beguile the learned and bewilder and confound the illiterate. Neology may suit the taste and meet the views of a certain class of Unitarian and Deistical disputants, who reject the *mysteries of revelation*, and boast of maintaining those doctrines *only* which fall within the range of human comprehension; but to such as believe in the incomprehensibility of the Divine Nature, and the miraculous operations of omnipotent power, as set forth in many places of God's word, mere rationalism, whether ancient or modern, affords no charm or satisfaction. It is a cold, sceptical, God-insulting, God-dishonouring theory. And the principle on which it is based, viewed philosophically, or in its application to natural objects, is unsound, and would lead to the rejection of numerous well-attested facts in natural philosophy, as well as to doctrines contained

in Christian theology, and even to a disbelief of the existence of the material universe and of intellectual existence. For no man can fully understand the essence and laws of the physical creation, or the primitive and original causes of his own existence. This assertion may appear somewhat startling to the reader, but I will try to make it manifest. A serious and philosophical investigation of matter, and the laws which give existence, form, and action to the innumerable material bodies which are found in the physical universe, would inevitably lead to the above conclusion. Natural philosophers generally satisfy themselves, in their investigations of nature, with attributing the various phenomena which come under their consideration, to the laws of adhesion, chemical affinity, magnetism, electricity, gravitation, &c. But what, I ask, do we know of these laws? We witness their operations and manifestations, and the important and beneficial results of their agency ; hence we know that such laws or powers exist ; but as to their essence and existence, apart from their active operations, these are things we cannot comprehend. Again, we know that we possess a physical, animated, and intelligent nature or existence ; but the original causes of our peculiar organisation, the essence in which our intellectual faculties inhere, and the principles of animal and intellectual life, are subjects which lie beyond the range of human observation. No wonder, then, that we cannot understand the essence of God, and the peculiar modes of the Divine existence, as set forth in the doctrine of the *Trinity in Unity*.

What we have to consider is, whether this is a doctrine of the Bible, and how it is there expressed and set forth.

It may be proper to remark, in the first place, that the word Trinity, or the phrase *Trinity in Unity*, does not occur in the Bible; and it must be further admitted that it is nowhere said, in the Scriptures, in one phrase or sentence, that "God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, are one." But there are several passages in the inspired writings in which this doctrine is implied. And taking the Word of God for our guide, we shall see that the doctrine of the Trinity—of the Trinity in Unity—is consistent in the highest degree with deductive evidence. In proceeding to make manifest the mysterious doctrine of the Trinity in Unity, it may be necessary to shew, from Scripture, that there really is a plurality of persons in the Godhead. And it is a remark worthy of our attention, that this great and important truth is expressed in the very first sentence in the inspired volume: "In the beginning *God* created the heaven and the earth;" on which declaration Dr. A. Clarke remarks: "The original word *Elohim*, God, is certainly the plural form of *El* or *Eloah*, and has long been supposed, by the most eminently learned and pious men, to imply a *plurality* of persons in the divine nature. As this plurality appears in so many parts of the sacred writings to be confined to three persons, hence the doctrine of the Trinity—which doctrine has formed a part of the creed of all those who have been deemed sound in faith, from the earliest ages of Christianity. Nor are *Christians* singular in receiving this doctrine, and in deriving it from the first words of divine revelation. An eminent Jewish rabbin, Simion Ben Joachi, in his comment on the sixth section of Leviticus, has these remarkable words: 'Come and see the mystery

of the word *Elohim*; there are *three degrees*, and each degree by itself *alone*, and yet notwithstanding they are all *one*, and *joined together in one*, and are not divided from each other.' He must be strangely prejudiced indeed who cannot see that the doctrine of a Trinity, and of a Trinity in Unity, is expressed in the above words. The verb *bara*, he created, being joined in the singular number with this plural noun, has been considered as pointing out, and not obscurely, the unity of the Divine Persons in this work of creation. In the ever-blessed Trinity, from the infinite and indivisible unity of the persons, there can be but one will, one purpose, and one infinite, incontrollable energy." If the opinion expressed by Dr. Clarke, in reference to the word *Elohim*, has been disputed by some learned men; on the other hand it is corroborated by a great number of biblical and classical scholars; consequently we consider that it is entitled to careful attention, at least. And it necessarily follows, that if *Elohim* in this place is plural, it implies more persons than one; and as the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are each spoken of as God, the legitimate and only inference is, that in the word *Elohim* is comprehended a *Trinity in Unity*.

The next passage which stands on the pages of sacred history in which this doctrine seems to be set forth, is in relation to the creation of man; where, in the divine consultation, the plural pronoun is used: "And God said, Let *us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness." (Gen. i. 26.) In this text the divine plurality is distinctly expressed in the use of the plural pronouns *us* and *our*; all the persons in the glorious Godhead are represented as being engaged in the work of creating man, who was originally

in the image and likeness of the adorable Trinity, viz. holy, just, and good, wise, glorious, and happy.

Another passage, in which the plurality of persons in the Godhead is implied, occurs in Gen. xi. 6, 7. The passage in question refers to the destruction of Babel, and the confusion and dispersion of the rebellious Cuthites: "And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let *us* go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." From these passages we may safely conclude, not only that there is a plurality of persons in the Godhead; but that all these persons co-operated in the creation of man, and in the superintendency of the world during the post-deluvian epoch, in the sovereign administration of justice, and in the whole scheme of providence, by which all things are sustained, preserved and governed. And by comparing Scripture with Scripture, it will be found that universal government is the result of their united purpose and eternal and infinitely wise counsel. But on this very important subject we might remark, that the deliberations, discussions, and determinations of the divine counsels, apparent in the consultations between the constituent persons of the *indivisible* Godhead, are not of such a character as to admit of or to suppose uncertainty or doubt, which, according to our notions, generally exist where there are deliberation and discussion; and, therefore, it seems that the special purpose of these divine records is to establish the verity of the doctrine of the *Holy Trinity*; and with regard to this subject, the words of the apostle Paul are strikingly ap-

plicable: "Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning." Rom. xv. 4. The above passages, implying a plurality of persons in the one Eternal Mind, are admirably fitted to prepare our minds for a reception of the great and glorious mystery comprehended in the *Trinity in Unity*, which was subsequently more clearly and distinctly revealed under the New Testament dispensation, in connection with the distinct offices of these three persons, and manifested in the redemption of the human race. In order that we may view this subject in as clear and profitable a manner as possible, let us consider—

1. That the Father and the Son, though distinct persons, are the same in reference to their divine and eternal essence, *i.e.* in personality they are distinct, but in essence they are one. In the gospel by St. John it is plainly stated, that "the Word was made flesh," and the Word that was made flesh was "the only begotten of the Father;" and this word (Logos) the "only begotten of the Father," was, in reference to his divine essence, *God*: "And the Word was God." John i. 1. Then the Son and the Father are one. On this, Scripture is plain and emphatic, "I and my Father are one"—"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." John x. 30, and xiv. 9. "He that hath seen me hath seen him *that sent me*;" xii. 45. Also, in chapter x. 28—30, our Saviour declares the distinction of persons, and yet the unity of the Father and himself, when he says, that his Father gave him his sheep and that no one shall pluck them out of his hands: because no one is able to pluck them out of his Father's hand—importing that the Father and himself are one: "My Father which gave them me is greater than all; and no

man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hands. *I and my Father are one.*" Therefore he said, "Neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand."

2. The Father and the Holy Ghost are one in essence, but distinct persons. In some portions of Scripture we find the only true and sovereign Jehovah speaking in his own name; but in other portions this is interpreted of the Holy Ghost, as the Jehovah who speaks; thus manifestly identifying the person of the Holy Ghost with the *divine nature*. But this same speaking Jehovah coming before us in the first person, at the same time introduces Jehovah to us in the third person; so that here we have an identity of nature and a distinction of persons. I shall take my illustration from Psalm xcv. 7—12: "To-day, if ye will hear *his* voice, harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness: when your fathers tempted *me*, proved *me*, and saw my works," &c. And St. Paul (Hebrews iii. 7) attributes the saying of this passage directly to the Holy Ghost: "Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith," &c. Hence it follows, that the Father and the Holy Ghost, though distinct persons, are one God.

3. The Son and the Holy Ghost, though characterised by personal distinctions, are one in the Godhead; which truth is clearly expressed in John xiv. 18: "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." In this passage the Saviour very clearly identifies himself with the Holy Ghost; for he had before declared that the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, should come to his disciples. And again, in chapter xvi. 7, he says: "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter



will not come unto you." In these passages we see a perfect distinction of persons, and yet Christ is identified with the Comforter, the Holy Ghost. Hence the Son and the Holy Ghost are two persons, but one God.

4. The Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father, and from the Son. John xiv. 26: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father shall send in my name." Here the Holy Ghost is spoken of as proceeding from the Father; but Christ also says: "But when the Comforter is come, whom *I* will send unto you from the Father," &c. Again, "And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." The Holy Spirit, then, proceeds from the Father and from the Son.

5. The Son proceedeth equally from the Father and from the Holy Ghost; therefore the Father and the Holy Ghost are one. This is proved from the holy incarnation and divine conception of the blessed Virgin: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." He shall be called the Son of God, because he proceeded from the Father and the Holy Ghost. Christ, who came "to seek and to save that which was lost," was sent "by the Lord and his Spirit." Isaiah xlviii. 16. .

6. We have already proved that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, have the same essential properties and attributes; and therefore they must be one in essence, seeing there cannot be two distinct and *separate infinite natures*.

7. The Father and the Son are contained in each other. This is evident from John xvi. 14, 15, where the

Saviour says : “ He shall glorify me : for he shall receive of mine, and shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine : therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.” And again, in John xiv. 11, “ Believe me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me.”

8. The Father and the Son are one with, and contained in, the Holy Ghost. Hence Christ said, “ If a man love me, he will keep my words : and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” John xiv. 23. But how do the Father and Son dwell with those who love him? but in and with the Holy Ghost. The subjects of this indwelling Deity are said to be “ full of the Holy Ghost.” And the precious promise which Christ made to his disciples, at the time of his departure, was the indwelling of the Comforter, and with him the Father and the Son, because these three are one. Hence—

9. The unity of the three persons in the Godhead, viz. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, may be proved by a collation of the foregoing facts and arguments. We have proved :

That the Father and the Son are one ;

That the Father and the Holy Ghost are one ;

That the Son and the Holy Ghost are one ; and therefore the conclusion is, that these three must be one.

We have also shewn, in the second course of argument—

That the Holy Ghost proceeds equally from the Father and the Son ;

That the Son proceeds from the Father and the Holy Ghost ;

That the Son is of the same *infinite* nature with the Father and the Holy Ghost. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost must therefore be one.

We have further proved—

That the Father and the Son are contained in each other ;

That the Holy Ghost contains the Father and the Son; and consequently the Holy Trinity are contained in each other, and therefore must be one.

We perhaps cannot do better than conclude this article in the language of the apostolic benediction :—

“ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.” 2 Cor. xiii. 14. We do not presume that the foregoing arguments on the Trinity in Unity will be deemed conclusive by every one who may read them; but our firm conviction is, that they are sound, scriptural, and consequently cannot be overturned by any method of mere human reasoning. “ The word of the Lord abideth for ever.” The subject in itself, as to its mode, is a holy mystery, which no finite mind can fully understand; it is nevertheless clearly revealed in the sacred volume, and consequently ought to be believed and received. (See “ Triplicity,” vol. ii. page 40 to 47.)

## XII. ON MAN: HIS ORIGIN.

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We are indebted to Revelation for our knowledge of the origin of the human race. All theories, apart from Revelation, on this subject, are chimerical and groundless. All mankind spring from the same original parent, however they may differ in their circumstances, or in their physical and intellectual peculiarities. A classification of the various families and tribes of mankind. The creation or original formation of the human body: "Let us make man." What this form of speech imports. The materials of which the human body was originally composed. The manner in which the Almighty raised the human system—gradually or instantaneously. The superiority of man, in his original state, compared with the other objects of the visible creation. The creation of man a glorious work, and displays the power, goodness, and wisdom of God. The laws of preservation, &c., incorporated in man's physical nature. The creation of the human soul. In connection with man's corporeal nature, there is a rational and immortal nature, called "*the soul*." The soul is not a part of God, neither was it composed of any pre-existing, refined atoms of matter, but *created* by God: "God breathed into man," &c. What is meant by this figurative expression. Parkhurst and Dr. A. Clarke on the word "*soul*." Man was originally in the image and likeness of God. What we are to understand by the resemblance to Deity. The idea expressed by *Ovid* in reference to the human body. The likeness to God refers more particularly to the moral resemblance of the soul to God, which consisted in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness. The happiness of our first parents while they retained their original state.

INDEPENDENTLY of revelation, man is ignorant of both his origin and destination. It is therefore a matter of unspeakable importance and advantage to mankind, that the Author of our being has condescended to inform us who was the first man, how he came into existence, and

what was his state and condition when he first entered on the stage of life. If God had kept these things in obscurity, and never have suffered them to come to light, the notions and ideas held by many respecting the origin of the human race would have been more contradictory and ridiculous than they now are. But all who read and believe the pages of inspired history, are delivered from those absurd notions and vain imaginations on this subject which infest the minds of the unenlightened heathen. The Mosaic account of the creation of man is very definite, clear, and laconic ; so that all who read may understand.

There is an atheistical hypothesis, embraced and propagated by a few sceptical philosophers in our day, which supposes that man, or the human body, was originally formed by some extraordinary influence and chemical combination of solar matter, or by some unknown operation in the course of nature. This opinion, whoever may be its author, is groundless and foolish, and the notion which gave birth to it is chimerical and absurd. Certain material substances of rude formation, or even delicate structure, may be produced by peculiar circumstances and a fortuitous co-operation of chemical properties ; but whoever impartially investigates the physical arrangement of the human body, and especially the accommodation of its various parts to the intellectual faculties, will at once see the absurdity of such a theory in reference to the origin of man, and will be lead to exclaim, with the inspired penman, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made." In the human system we discover a complication of wonders. This, indeed, is the case in reference to all organised animal bodies, but in none so remarkable as in man. I

have read of an eminent physician, of the greatest fame for his skill in the science of anatomy, and for his profound physiological knowledge of the human body, who was affected, even to tears, on contemplating the wisdom of God as seen in the human frame, and challenged any one, after the study of one hundred years, to shew him the smallest sinew, vein, artery, &c., which could have been more commodiously placed, either for use or beauty. We therefore conclude, that although the propagation of man is now in a settled course of nature, (which is merely the instrument of God), the first production of mankind was by the immediate power of the almighty Author of nature. And it may not be improper distinctly to notice, though it may appear to be a little digressing from the subject under immediate consideration, that all succeeding generations of men, in every country, are the progeny of our first parents. This fact, I am aware, is questioned by some natural philosophers, on the ground of the physical and intellectual differences which characterise the various tribes and families of the human race. It must be admitted that there are certain distinguishing characteristics developed in the various tribes and races of mankind; this no one will attempt to deny who has ever carefully studied the subject. Eminent naturalists have endeavoured to ascertain such peculiar characteristics as would enable them to class the whole under a few comprehensive denominations; but it is a well known fact, that they have arrived at very different conclusions.

Malte-Brun has divided the whole of the human family into sixteen distinct races, which he considers are clearly distinguished from each other by certain definite peculiari-

ties; but the more general received opinion is, that they may be reduced to five, while some authors say to three. The physical differences consist in the colour of the skin, the nature of their hair, the formation of their heads and faces, and some other minor distinctions. While some are distinguished for intellectual eminence, as the *Caucasian* race; others are distinguished for intellectual inferiority, of whom the Ethiopic or *Negro* race stands lowest in this respect. This may be, in a great measure, owing to the want of mental cultivation; for, according to the accounts of many travellers and missionaries, while many of them have shewn no inventive genius, many others have shewn no mean degree of talent, and some of them have risen to considerable eminence in intellectual attainments, erudition, and political knowledge. Hence, all things considered, we may very safely conclude, that notwithstanding the many varieties which distinguish the various tribes and families of the human race, they all spring from the same original parents. The distinctions, whether physical or intellectual, are the different effects produced by climate, food, customs, manners, education, and general training. These circumstances operate very powerfully, both upon the physical and intellectual nature of mankind, which might be clearly demonstrated in thousands of instances within the compass of our own knowledge. And we must bear in mind that thousands of years have elapsed in developing the present distinguishing characteristics of the various races of mankind. It might be interesting and instructive to point out the various causes of human degradation and elevation; but this, at present, would be out of place. I have made the above remarks simply to shew, that however men may

differ in their various conditions in life, in their intellectual developments and physical appearances they are all children of the same original parents; consequently all fell in the first Adam, and, as Christ died for the whole of our race, all are redeemed by the second Adam, "the Lord from heaven."

When we speak, therefore, of the origin of man, we speak of the great and illustrious progenitor of the whole human race. Wherever man is found, and whatever his social, physical, moral, and intellectual condition, he is a member of the same great family, and if he were acquainted with his own genealogy, he might trace his ancestry to Adam, the primitive father of all living; and *Adam* "*was the son of God*," "for God made him out of the dust of the earth, breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul." Hence man is a compound being, having a body and a soul, distinctly and separately created. Let us consider—

I. *The creation of the body.* The performance of this work was the result of Divine counsel, and accompanied with a display of solemn majesty: "Let us make man." In the creation of other things, however great and grand, *Jehovah* only spake and it was done. He said, "Let there be light, and it was so. Let there be a firmament, and it was so. Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, and it was so," &c. But before he brought man into existence, he seemed to make a solemn pause, to retire within himself, and to consult with the other persons of the Godhead: "Let us make man." Not that he hesitated to proceed without the concurrence of others, or felt any difficulty in the performance of his sublime purpose; but we



may presume the Author of our being used this form of speech to intimate the dignity of man, as well as to set forth a plurality of persons engaged in the work of creation. Some learned doctors of the Jewish Church have argued that the deliberation was real, and that "God consulted some angelic beings, whom he thought proper to engage in the work of man's creation;" but this opinion is a mere fancy, without foundation. It seems more reasonable to suppose that it was a majestic form of speech, designed to represent the great importance of the work. How astonishing this production of God's creative energy! Out of the dust of the ground he produced the most curious and beautiful figure, designed as a tenement for an immortal, god-like spirit, to which the Almighty gave understanding.

The original materials of which the human body was composed were mean. Although the body is a handsome and complicated piece of machinery, "fearfully and wonderfully made," it was originally composed of earth, and in connection with its formation were incorporated the elements of air, fire, and water. These four materials now form the constituents of man's corporeal nature; drawn out into fibres, woven into membranes, formed into muscles, vessels, veins, arteries, tubes, hollow strings, cartilage, and bones.

As it regards the manner in which the Almighty raised this beautiful system, whether instantaneously or progressively, we cannot with safety say. But in whatever manner the work was wrought, it was a striking display of Divine power, wisdom, and goodness. Let us suppose that the human frame was instantaneously raised out of the ground, and that at the same time God breathed into him

the breath of life. What a display of power and wisdom, to cause a man—full of life and vigour, clothed with strength and majesty, adorned with beauty and symmetry, endowed with sense and reason—to walk uprightly and to talk eloquently! Behold him just brought into existence, his figure noble and erect, his countenance serene and commanding; shewing that he was destined for authority, power, and dominion; in a word, to be “the lord of creation.” His understanding clear and penetrating, comprehending the grandeur and sublimity of creation, and with the noble faculty of speech he gives expression and power to his thoughts. There he stands, shining forth, and rejoicing in the image and favour of his glorious Creator.

But it may seem more reasonable to some, and more consistent with the form of words made use of to describe the creation of man, to suppose that his body was formed progressively, and that the different elementary particles of which the body is composed were joined together in regular order, and the wonderful structure finished part by part, till the entire fabric was raised, made to possess admirable physical endowments, and fitted to be the residence of a rational and immortal spirit. On this hypothesis, the work appears no less wonderful. We first see a portion of earth taken into the Divine hands, or operated on by his almighty power, and converted into a solid, symmetrical, but unconscious skeleton. The bones are united by ligaments and tendons, which are designed to give elasticity and strength to the body. These are next covered with cartilage and a nervous vascular membrane called periosteum, which renders the bones, when united, capable of playing freely, and, in connection with the muscles, of

performing a variety of graceful motions. Then millions of fibres are formed and placed together in systematic order in upwards of five hundred different collections, and placed on every part of this bony system, "each contained in a cellular sheath: these are muscles to actuate the body, and give strength and compactness to the bones." Then are stretched over the entire body a variety of membranous canals, for the purpose of conveying blood and secreted fluids. Next appear the instruments of sensation stretched throughout the vesicles, and over every part of the body, divided and sub-divided in every direction. In this way every part of which the body is composed is brought forth and arranged in order, without the least error or imperfection; and when completed God enkindled within it the vital flame. The blood begins to flow along the veins, sensations of pleasure thrill through every part, a lively hue flushes in the countenance, the muscles are brought into action, which enable him to perform the functions of life. He speaks, moves, thinks, understands, loves, and glorifies his Maker. Hence, whether God made man instantaneously, or by degrees, the work was a glorious display of Divine power and wisdom. Nor was his goodness less manifest. God might have displayed his skill and power in making man of such a form that he would have been incapable of happiness in so high a degree as he now is. But God is a Being of infinite goodness, and therefore designed our happiness, and made us capable of enjoyment. It is amazing to see how every part is adapted to its proper use, so as to contribute to man's support. He is well constituted both for health and pleasure.

The body also is as wonderfully preserved as it is made.

It possesses, in its own natural functions, the power or laws of preservation. As it is a living body, a constant supply of atmospheric air is necessary, which being received into the lungs, comes in contact with the blood in its circulation through the lungs, and in the action of respiration the system is relieved of that superfluous matter which would clog and stop the wheels of life. Fresh air is also thereby circulated through the system, by which every part of the human frame is renewed and invigorated. And as a constant waste is going on, a constant supply is necessary. And God has connected a peculiar pleasure with our receiving such necessary supplies. The various organs of digestion and secretion are planted in our nature, to convert a portion of the food we take into the real substance of the body, and thereby the system, for a certain period, is preserved from decay and death, which probably would have been without interruption or cessation but for sin. Death is the consequence of sin.

II. *The Creation of the Soul.* Every man carries within himself an indubitable moral evidence that he has, in connection with his physical nature, an intelligent, rational principle, which enables him to think and reason. This is called the *soul*. In reference to its nature, capabilities, essence, and the duration of its existence, many conflicting opinions are entertained. We nevertheless think it is very clearly expressed in the Word of God, that the Almighty is the author of its existence, and that it was created subsequently to, and in a certain sense separately from, the body. Originally it was perfectly pure, and shone forth in the moral image and likeness of its Creator. We shall—

1. Notice whether or not the soul is a part of God.

Some theologians who have written on this subject contend that it must be an emanation from the Divine Nature, and consequently a part of himself, or a part of the life, spirit, and essence of the Holy Trinity. W. Law, M.A., in his "Truths of the Gospel," when speaking of the origin of the human soul, says, "It came forth as the breath of life, or lives, out from the mouth of God; and it is, and can be, nothing else but something or so much of the Divine Nature." Other psychologists, among the philosophers of antiquity, maintained that the soul of man was originally formed out of some pre-existent, refined atoms of matter. Both of these notions are anti-scriptural and erroneous, and would conduct to the most revolting and dangerous conclusions. To say that the soul is a part of God, implies the divisibility of the Divine essence; and not only so, but the possibility of the Divine Nature being changed and depraved, degraded and punished, which is certainly the condition of the human soul. But the indivisible and unchangeable essence of the Eternal Mind is repugnant to any such notions. The immutable and essential essence of Deity cannot be divided and subjected to such mutation and degradation as that which have characterised the human soul. I am aware that great stress has been laid upon the significant expression, "God breathed into man the breath of life," &c. From this expression it has been inferred that the soul must have come out of the *Trinity*, and, of course, the substance of which it was composed have formed a part of the Divine nature.

On this subject it may be proper to remark—

1. By breathing, in this passage of Scripture, we are not to understand *literal respiration*; as this act is a physi-

cal, organic effort, which requires muscular exertion, &c. The expression seems simply to denote an act of Divine energy, which, in the figurative style of the sacred writer, is called breathing. But to infer from this, that the soul was literally formed of exhaled particles from the lungs, and “out of the mouth of God,” is to suppose that the Almighty is “altogether such an one as ourselves,” whose life depends on respiration. That men totally destitute of education should fall into such mistakes respecting the nature of the Divine Being, is not very surprising; but for men of letters, and professors of arts and sciences—men who have graduated at universities and obtained diplomatic honours—to receive and propagate ideas so unphilosophical and absurd, is not a little surprising.

2. But, for argument's sake, or I would rather say for the sake of truth, suppose the expression to be taken literally, namely, that “God breathed into man,” and that on account of his thus breathing, “man became a living soul;” this would not necessarily imply that God actually communicated to the body of man an essential part of himself. Neither does it necessarily follow, because man was originally in the image and likeness of God, that he was formed of the breath of God, or that his breath was a part of himself. When man breathes, he does not exhale his own image and likeness, any more than when he talks, nor indeed so much, for words are verbal transcripts of his thoughts; but the mere act of breathing neither presents to us an image, nor emits any essential part of either body or mind. It is an action essential to life, but the exhalation ceases to be any part of ourselves as soon as it is emitted. Hence, properly and philosophically speaking, no

man, in breathing, exhales a part of himself. Therefore, were the expression to be taken literally, which would be grossly erroneous, it does not necessarily follow that God, in the creation of the human soul, communicated a part of himself.

3. According to Parkhurst, Dr. A. Clarke, and many other classical scholars, the original phrase, which in our version is translated "*living soul*," does not merely signify the immortal part of man, but also animal life, and that it might have been translated, "and man became a living creature." And this seems very evident to every intelligent reader, without any critical reference to the original. For, it was not until man was operated on by the vital energy of God, that he began to live, either physically or intellectually. But when God breathed into him "the breath of *lives*," the body was animated. The principle of natural life was infused into his corporeal nature; and at the same time, the inspiration of the Almighty kindled into being a spiritual nature, and endowed it with all the attributes which we now find in the human mind. And this intelligent and spiritual nature, in its original state, as it came out of the hands of its wise and infinitely perfect Creator, bore a striking resemblance to its Maker. Hence, man was made—in his body, emblematic of, and in his soul, morally and intellectually—in the image and likeness of God. Let us endeavour to understand correctly in what this resemblance to Deity consisted.

(1.) Some learned men, who have written on this subject, suppose that man's visible appearance, in a certain sense, bore some resemblance to Deity, and especially so if it possessed a visible lustre, which in all probability it

did. Not that the invisible God, who is a spirit, hath any shape or dimensions, like the human body (as asserted by the raving apostles of Mormonism); but the upright posture of man's physical nature is very significant and expressive of his authority and dominion over the inferior creation. And, as his external appearance was so expressive of this striking characteristic of his inner nature and god-like capacity of ruling and governing, in an analogical sense it may be said the visible appearance of man bore some resemblance to Deity. The most accomplished and sensible heathen philosophers entertained an idea, that man was made in the image of God, and that this image was expressed, to a certain extent, in his outward appearance. Ovid having observed that "the Divine Counsel formed man in the image of the *all ruling gods*," adds the following lines :—

" While other creatures to the earth look down,  
He gave to man a front sublime,  
And raised his noble view to ken the starry heavens."

The upright form, the visible lustre, the contemplative eyes, and the commanding countenance of man, in his pristine glory, were such developments of his nature as are calculated to impress the mind with the most dignified ideas of the majesty, authority, wisdom, glory, and greatness of our Creator. And therefore he may be said to have been "in the image of God," because the character and perfections of the Great Invisible were emblematically manifested in man's glorious appearance.

(2.) Man's being created in the image and likeness of God, refers more particularly, if not exclusively, to his



soul or intellectual nature, which was formed after the likeness of the natural and moral perfections of God. To the natural perfections he bore a resemblance, inasmuch as he was created and formed, physically and intellectually, to have authority and dominion over all other earthly creatures. He was brought into existence to rule and govern the world. Hence the phrase, "and let them have dominion," &c. In his ruling and governing powers, we see some faint resemblance of the eternal power and infinite majesty of the Most High. He stood forth as the lord and high priest of this newly-formed world, or rather as himself the one temple on the earth, in whose soul the true Shekinah, or shining of the Godhead, dwelt continually, and displayed his glory. These sentiments are expressed by Milton—

"Two of far nobler shape, erect and tall,  
God-like erect, with native honour clad,  
In naked majesty seem'd lords of all,  
And worthy seem'd; for in their looks divine  
The image of their glorious Maker shone:  
Truth, wisdom, sanctitude, severe and pure—  
Whence true authority in men."

(3.) The soul of man, in its essence and spiritual nature, bears a likeness to God. "God is a Spirit," infinitely wise, invisible, and immortal. The soul of man, too, is an immortal, immaterial substance, endowed with rational capabilities. But, according to the reference made by the inspired apostle to this original image and likeness, it more particularly consisted in *knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness*. When speaking of conversion as a putting

on of the *new man*, he says : " And be renewed in the spirit of your mind ; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Eph. iv. 23, 24. And when speaking on the same subject, in his epistle to the Colossians, he says : " Ye have put off the old man with his deeds ; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him." Col. iii. 9, 10. From these passages we learn, that man's original resemblance to God consisted principally in a likeness to these perfections of the Divine Mind. He was wise in his mind, righteous in his actions, and holy in his heart.

(1.) He was endowed with a vast amount of knowledge and true wisdom. The range of his information was of course limited, but still it was extensive and clear. As God designed him to occupy a very lofty and important station in creation, he endowed him with knowledge accordingly. However disposed, therefore, we might feel to palliate his rebellious conduct, in relation to his fall, on the grounds of his ignorance, both reason and revelation forbid such extenuation. As God created him capable of knowing his duty, and of performing all the acts of obedience which were divinely required, his transgression cannot be covered or mitigated with any plausible excuse. His knowledge of God, of himself, and of the relation between them, and of his duty to God on that account, was undoubtedly clear and comprehensive. He knew also that his felicity was inseparably connected with his obedience to God, and that disobedience would separate him from God, rob him of his dignity and happiness, and reduce him to shame and misery. It is presumable, from

what is said, bearing on this subject, by the sacred historian, that he would be thus far acquainted with his duty and danger. Hence, to the divine prohibition was affixed a penal threat: "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." And whatever other requirements were exacted by the Author of his being, of which we are ignorant, they would be accompanied most assuredly with impressions on his mind sufficient to convince him of the necessity of obedience; for all intelligent creatures, who have a knowledge of God, know that he must be obeyed, and that those who disobey him will be reduced to shame and punishment. Hence, man was endowed with *knowledge* that he might act *wisely*.

(2.) He was naturally righteous; he had no propensity to do evil. Righteous principles formed the essential elements of his moral nature, that is, they were essential to his spiritual life and the resemblance of his moral rectitude to his Creator. But, as righteousness, in its practical operations, consists in doing right, it of course signifies conformity to rule or law; and this rule or law, necessarily implied in the original righteousness of our first parents, was the *will of their Maker*; which by some means was undoubtedly made known to them. Some writers seem to think that the moral law, subsequently given to Moses, was in substance given to Adam. Others, from various reasons, think this was not the case. However this might be, it is evident a law was given them, and God created them with such moral capabilities as were requisite to enable them to live in conformity to this law. Hence, though man was free to fall, he was able to stand; and when he sinned, the consequent guilt and condemnation

fell upon his own soul. When a transgressor puts off "the old man," and is renewed by the Spirit of the living God, he receives a conformity to the divine likeness. What then is the state and feelings of his renovated mind? "Thy will, O God, be done," is the continual prayer of his heavenly nature; and while he continues to produce good works in faith and love, through the sanctifying influences of the Spirit of holiness, he is regarded by God as a righteous man. Then we may reasonably infer, as man came immediately from God, there could be nothing unjust or impure about him: he was *very* good, without the least taint of moral evil. Hence—

(3.) He was holy. Holiness seems to signify something more than righteousness. It is a word sufficient in itself to import the idea of perfect purity, or moral perfection; and in this sense it is frequently used by the most learned theologians. The sacred writers also use this word to denote purity of heart, freedom from sin and sinful affections, &c. Sanctification, in the highest and most refined sense, is perfect purity of soul, manifested in uniform obedience to the will of God. "Be ye holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy." "The will of God is even your sanctification." With this purity, and with these principles of entire holiness, our first parents were originally created.

(4.) While Adam and Eve continued in purity, righteousness, and obedience to God, they were happy. All true and rational enjoyment springs from enlightenment of mind and purity; hence perfect holiness, accompanied with a large measure of knowledge, is invariably productive of true happiness; especially so if outward circumstances be

favourable to such a state of mind. Now, every thing stated in relation to the paradisaical state of our first parents, contributes to shew that they were perfectly happy. They were wise and holy, and consequently there was nothing within to disturb their peace, or to make them miserable. No envy, malice, pride, fear, or unlawful desires ; no bodily pain, sickness, or physical infirmity. Their hearts were pure, and their inward peace flowed like a river. There was nothing without to disturb or annoy them. The earth yielded fruit in abundance to supply their wants, and all the beasts of the field were in perfect subjection to them, instinctively submitting to their authority and right of dominion. On the residence and condition allotted to our first parents, it has been remarked by an eminent author, that it is " a subject which has in a high degree engaged the attention and awakened the delights of every reader. Its trees, its fruits, and its fields, arrayed in innumerable kinds of flowers of different hue, and adorned with smiling verdure ; the balmy influence which breathed in its winds, and life flowing in its rivers ; the serenity of its sky and splendour of its sunshine, together with the immortality which seem to burnish all its ravishing scenes, has filled the heart with rapture, and awakened the most romantic visions of the imagination."

### XIII. ON THE FALL OF MAN FROM HIS ORIGINAL CONDITION.

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How long man continued in his original state. Man is evidently a fallen being. Various theories in reference to the fall. Man was originally in a state of trial, consequently a moral and accountable agent. The origin of moral evil, a profound and mysterious subject. The reflections on this subject by Professor Dwight, sublime and plausible, but in some respects objectionable. Dr. Pye Smith's views. God cannot be the author of sin. Reasons why God does not prevent Sin. Mr. Law's notions contain nothing new, and are objectionable. References to King, Clarke, and Stackhouse, on the origin of Sin. The fall of man was occasioned by a violation of the Adamic Covenant. The real agent of the temptation was a fallen Angel; the instrumental agent, a Serpent. Various opinions of the learned as to what kind of a creature the Serpent was. The radical import of the Hebrew and Arabic words which are translated *serpent*, (by Dr. A. Clarke.) The Mosaic narrative of the fall carefully and critically considered. The character of the temptation. The peculiar notions of some Jewish Authors respecting the first temptation. The fatal deed. The ruinous consequences. The conduct of Adam and Eve after they had sinned. Commentary on this subject often false and erroneous.

In the high, holy, and happy state in which we have viewed man, he continued but for a short time; how long we cannot say. Some writers say only three days; and others say thirty three years. These are two extremes, and to guess at any definite time would be to expose ourselves to ridicule unnecessarily. That he did fall, and was driven before an angry God, out of Paradise, into a state of banishment, degradation, and misery, is abundantly

evident. If there were no sacred history or inspired narrative on this subject, we should have sufficient proof of the fall of man in the practical developments of human nature. The awful fact is manifested in the history of mankind, and in the diversified forms of vice which still characterise the masses of our degenerate community, in every country, and in all the various walks of life. It is a terrible fact, and universally admitted, with very few exceptions, that man, by nature and by practice, previously to his conversion from sin to holiness, is inwardly depraved and outwardly wicked. We admit that in these respects there are differences in different individuals, at least according to all human appearance. Moral depravity, nevertheless, characterises the entire number of our degenerate race. Now if God, who is the author of our being, is infinitely wise and unchangeably good, which we have shewn to be the case, he could not make man as he now is, viz. depraved, ignorant, rebellious, worldly, sensual and devilish; for such a production would be unworthy of his name and character, and altogether incompatible with his natural and moral perfections.

We have shewn, in the preceding essay, that man was originally wise, holy, just, and good; and that both in his temporal condition and spiritual nature he was perfectly happy. Therefore, as man is not now what he originally was, he carries in his own nature, and manifests in his general moral conduct, infallible evidence of his fall and degeneracy. This palpable truth receives further confirmation from the Mosaic account of man's fall, which historical account we believe to be divinely inspired. On this subject the genius and reflective powers of man have been exceed-

ingly prolific. But it is not my design to trouble the reader with the multifarious opinions and philological criticisms of ancient and modern authors. Such theories only will be referred to as are considered worthy of notice and entitled to investigation. The facts of the case, as narrated by the inspired author, are but few, and stated in very plain and apparently simple language. Though it must be admitted that the Mosaic account of the fall is not altogether free from ambiguity, and hence may be understood in different senses; and as to the kind of creature which Satan made use of in the temptation, learned men see reason to differ in opinion; on this subject it will be necessary—

1. Distinctly to notice, that when God placed our first parents in the garden of Eden, they were in a state of trial, and therefore, in order to test their sincerity and allegiance to the author of their being, God gave them a law, or laws, suitable to their state and condition. As to God's having a right to exercise supreme authority over man antecedently to his choice and consent, that is a subject which cannot reasonably be questioned, when we consider that he is the sole author of our existence. In accordance with this idea of the Divine Sovereignty, the Psalmist says: "*Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.*" And, as Dr. Bates observes, "The two principal and necessary parts of his Sovereignty and right of moral government are, to give laws for the ruling of his subjects, and to pass final judgment upon them for their obedience or disconformity to his precepts.

These facts imply man's moral agency and account-



ability. Placed in this situation, and under these probationary circumstances, our first parents were permitted to be tempted by a fallen angel, the devil. Hence, we see moral evil existed in fallen angels before it existed in fallen man. How, or under what circumstances, moral evil originated, we cannot say. On this awful and mysterious subject, Professor Dwight, and other profound theologians, have speculated to a very great extent. But the subject seems to be too profound for the human mind, in its present state, to understand. The above named author, in the conclusion of his discourse on "*The Origin of Moral Evil*," adduces some very important and interesting reflections, in which he attempts to shew the immense glory and endless praise which redound "*to God and the Lamb*" on account of the boundless love and infinite mercy displayed in the stupendous scheme of human redemption, and the elevation of a vast portion of the human race to heaven, by means of redeeming grace, which never could have been the case, if evil had not existed. And from this fact he seems to infer the wisdom and goodness of the Almighty in *allowing* moral evil to have originated; as his greatness and glory, and the infinite riches of his grace, are so sublimely developed in the influences and operations of counteracting mercy and grace. There are some lofty and plausible sentiments contained in such reflections, but still they fall short of unravelling the great mystery. Doing evil, or allowing evil in order that good may result, is a characteristic of moral conduct which cannot with propriety be applied to a Being of infinite wisdom, almighty power, and uncompounded goodness. Evil must ever be viewed as remote from God, and as the abominable thing which he hates, and

against which he has ever manifested his displeasure. Consequently, as Dr. Pye Smith, on the proposition, "God is not the author or efficient cause of sin," says, "Sin is incompatible with the natural and moral attributes of God," and observes, "Holiness abhors sin ; the truth of God opposes sin as falshood ; wisdom, as it is folly ; goodness, as it is malignity ; power, as it tends to destruction." "Therefore we are bound to conclude, that sin is not the result of the Divine decretive will in any way which implies God's approbation or indulgence, or productive influence." And as to the reason why he does not put forth his moral power, or grace, to prevent its occurrence, it is a difficulty too vast and awful for human speculation ; and it is necessary at times to check our minds, lest we indulge in lawless and extravagant fancies. "Perhaps the removal of darkness from this subject is perfectly impossible in our present state ;" and it is absurd, if not sinful, to wish to penetrate and unfold divine mysteries which revelation does not explain. Let us patiently wait the solution of clearer light ; many things which we know not here, we shall know hereafter. In that brighter, better life, where all is light and love, our minds will be expanded and illuminated, so that we shall understand many things which are now buried in the unfathomable depths of the divine counsels ; and it is possible that we may then see the wisdom and goodness of God in allowing moral evil to exist.

I have examined many authors on this subject ; but in my opinion, up to the present time, human hypotheses have failed to exhibit and set forth the subject in a clear and satisfactory manner. Whatever theory we adopt,

there is something involved which appears exceedingly mysterious, and which leads the devout mind to exclaim, "How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out." Mr. Law has laid down a plausible hypothesis on the origin of sin, on which he presumptuously remarks, "Here may be seen *at once*, in the *clearest light*, the true origin of all evil in the creation, without the least imputation upon the Creator." Mr. Law's hypothesis is only an old theory modified and dressed up in a new garb. It simply sets forth that the devil and his angels, prior to their fall, were (in a properly qualified sense) free agents, had the power of "*self-motion*," and by the power of that "*self-motion*" separated themselves "from the light and love which should have kept them glorious angels." But this explanation of the first occurrence of sin does not throw one single ray of new light on the subject, but rather mystifies it by the use of the ambiguous phrase, "*self-motion*." King's essay on "The Origin of Moral Evil" is also inconclusive, in attempting to prove that "God was *obligated* to make man liable to fall." Clarke's "Inquiry on the Origin of Sin" is much the same. Stackhouse's remark, that "a fallen being is better than no being at all," is a very unguarded expression, and totally devoid of any appearance of truth. Whatever opinion we adopt in relation to the origin of evil, there are mysteries involved which we cannot understand. But, though we cannot fully understand how, and under what circumstances, sin first came into existence, nor the reason why the omnipotent Jehovah allowed it to exist, we are not left in the dark in reference to the manner and the means by which it was introduced into our world, and became associated with

human nature. The devil, who was the first sinner of which we have any knowledge, tempted and beguiled our first parents, led them to believe a lie, and violate the divine law, by which they fell from God and happiness. In this moral catastrophe, which terminated the paradisaical glory and happiness of the illustrious possessors of Eden, there are several particulars which deserve a careful and distinct investigation. We admit, that the whole of this awful revolution in the moral universe may be summed up in a single sentence, namely: The actual introduction of sin into our world was the violation of the Adamic Covenant. But in this act of violation there are several particulars worthy of special attention.

1. The real agent of the temptation. The person who employed himself in this accursed work of bringing about the fall, misery, and ruin of the human race, was a fallen angel; and he is uniformly spoken of in Scripture as being the leader and chief of the apostate angels. He is designated The Devil, that old Serpent, the Dragon, the Wicked One, the Tempter, the Deceiver, the Angel of the bottomless pit, the God of this world, the Prince of the power of the air, the Destroyer, the Enemy, &c.; all of which names are very significant of his nature, and point out a real person of great power. And by referring to other portions of Scripture we find that the devil and his legions have formed a kind of polity, and their power, influence, and agency are combined and arranged, and operate in a certain order, and for the accomplishment of certain purposes. (See Matt. xii. 26; Col. i. 13; Eph. vi. 12; Col. ii. 15; and Matt. xxv. 41.) The head or chief of these apostate spirits was the person who first tempted Eve in the Garden of Eden.

2. For the accomplishment of this purpose he employed an instrumental agent, "*The Serpent*." In the Mosaic narrative of the fall, the Devil, or Satan, is not mentioned, because he concealed himself in "the Serpent," and operated through its instrumentality. Moses relates this history from what appeared externally to sense, and by a metonymical figure, (a style frequently adopted by Hebrew authors) he speaks of the instrument for the efficient cause. Both therefore are conjoined—the Serpent as the instrument, and the Devil as the *self-moving agent* and primary cause. The Devil therefore is designated by our Lord, "A murderer from the beginning; a liar, because there is no truth in him; the father of lies." John viii. 44. The Mosaic narrative of the fall reads thus:—"Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? . . . lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." The woman, under the influence of this persuasive argument, and seeing "that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, did eat; and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat." Various are the opinions entertained by commentators, as to what kind of a creature it was that conversed with and tempted Eve. Many biblical scholars, as well as common readers, have the idea that it was a common serpent—a Boa Constrictor, or something of that kind. Some commentators think it was a kind of winged or flying serpent, approaching the form of a seraph, or an

“angel of light.” Milton, in Book ix. of “Paradise Lost,” describes the Serpent as a creature of extraordinary beauty:

“Pleasing was his shape and lovely.”

Isaac Aberbanel, a learned Jew, in his exposition of this portion of Scripture, describes the serpent as a “beautiful and nimble creature.” He says, “It ascended the tree of knowledge, in the presence of Eve, before it spoke, and began to eat the fruit; after which it spoke, and Eve seeing this, that the eating of the fruit gave the power of speech and reason to the serpent, thence concluded, after being invited to partake of the fruit, that if she ate of it she would also much improve and advance her nature.”

Mr. H. Melville, in his eloquent sermon on the fall of man, expresses the same idea as Milton and Aberbanel conjointly.

He says, “The curse pronounced upon the serpent seems to imply, that it had not been created a reptile, but became classed with creeping things as a consequence of the curse. It is probable that heretofore the serpent had been remarkable for beauty and splendour, and on this account the tempter chose it as the vehicle of his approaches. Eve, in all likelihood, was attracted towards the creature by its loveliness, and when she found it endowed, like herself, with the power of speech, she possibly concluded that it had itself eaten of the fruit, and acquired thereby a gift which she thought confined to herself and her husband.” This is a plausible imagination, but it is not in accordance with the inspired narrative, and consequently cannot be accepted as true.

Most biblical students are aware that Dr. Adam Clarke has entered into a critical investigation of the original word *nachash*, which in our version, in the *Septuagint*, and in

many other versions, is translated *Serpent*. After shewing us the various significations of the term as used in Scripture, (see his commentary), he observes, "That it appears to be a sort of *general term*, confined to no one sense. Hence it will be necessary to examine the root accurately, to see if its ideal meaning will enable us to ascertain the animal intended in the text." He then furnishes us with the signification of the root, or radical import of the Hebrew word, and also of the original import of an Arabic word of great similarity; on which he observes, "It is very remarkable also, that from the same root comes *Khanas*, the DEVIL, which appellation he bears from that meaning of *Khanasa*, he drew off, seduced," &c. He also says, "Is it not strange that the devil and the ape should have the same name, derived from the same root." From these etymological facts, he comes to a conclusion, that the creature through which the devil tempted Eve was an "*ape or ouran outang*, and that such a creature answers to every part of the description in the text." Though this opinion has been made the subject of burlesque and ridicule, it has never been overturned. And if we cannot adopt Dr. Clarke's views on the subject, it must be admitted that his arguments and conclusions are the legitimate deductions of etymological and physical facts; and although somewhat ambiguous, they are nevertheless entitled to a calm and serious consideration. The learning and elaborate investigations of such an eminent critic and sound biblical scholar as Dr. Clarke, ought, at least, to induce every Bible student to pause, and pronounce cautiously. Derision is not argument, or Christ would have been silenced by the covetous Pharisees, when he reproved them for

their worldly-mindedness. Many who derided the notions of Dr. Clarke would be altogether incompetent to shew the inaccuracy of his criticisms or the fallacy of his reasoning. I make these remarks, not by way of indorsing his doctrine or peculiar notions, but by way of seasonable caution. And, I think, from the phraseology of the Mosaic narrative, we have as much reason to believe that the creature used as the instrument in the temptation of Eve, was an *ouran outang* as a seraph, or some earthly creature of seraphic form and appearance. Let us again turn our attention to the original narrative: "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made; and he said unto the woman," &c. This brief description of "*the serpent*," in reference to its station in creation, though somewhat dubious, as expressed in the word *subtle*, which signifies *sly* or *cunning*, seems to convey an idea of its superiority over the other animals of the brute creation. Whatever it was *naturally*, in reference to its capabilities of talking and reasoning, as described in the narrative, or whether these acts were supernatural—the creature, at that time, being the instrument of Satan—we cannot safely decide. Some think that these powers were natural to the creature, or the woman would have expressed her surprise when he accosted her in the language of the temptation; others, we learn from the preceding remarks, think differently; they conclude that the force of the temptation was in the change which the supposed Serpent had undergone in eating the fruit. It is possible she might have never seen the creature before, and consequently had no knowledge of its powers or capabilities; though, as it was a superior animal, this was not likely to have been the



case. From the nature of the curse pronounced upon the *Serpent*, it is evident that it has undergone some physical change; and that in its original state it either walked erect, like a human being, or otherwise was either a quadruped or an aerial winged creature. It is presumable it was not in the reptile form, either with or without legs; its external appearance was more noble and dignified. But the precise shape, size, and appearance of this now accursed, degraded creature, no man can safely determine; we may conclude therefore, that it is not of material consequence for us to know.

3. Let us now consider the character of the temptation, and the manner in which it was carried into effect. These are particulars which demand our most serious attention.

It is a fact worthy of particular notice, that the woman was attacked by the enemy when she was alone; or at any rate we have strong reason to believe this was the case, both from the circumstances of the fall, and the subsequent apology of Adam, when questioned by his Maker on the subject. In this movement we at once perceive the cunning artifice of the tempter. Had he made his attempt when they were both together, the probability is that his design would have been frustrated. But being alone, and yielding to the lust of the eye, and the fascinating falsehoods of the wicked one, without a counsellor, she fell into actual transgression; and, instigated by Satan, she immediately offered the forbidden fruit to her husband, "and he did eat." We have no more record, in reference to any conversation which took place between Eve and her husband on this matter; but it would appear that when the fruit was offered to him by his wife, whose sincerity he had no reason to suspect, he offered little or no resist-

ance to the temptation : " he did eat." The means which the devil, or evil genius, made use of, under the semblance of a serpent, were not violence, but persuasion. Some Jewish writers assert, that in connection with persuasion, the serpent used physical force. They suppose the woman, when first tempted to partake of the forbidden fruit, resolutely refused, and insisted she was not allowed by her Maker even so much as to touch the tree ; " whereupon the serpent pushed her against the tree, and said, See, thou hast touched it, and art still alive ; thou mayest therefore safely eat of the fruit, for surely thou shalt not die." This account is a mere fable, and I mention it only to caution the *youthful reader* against all such, and such like, groundless traditions, whether they come from *Jerusalem* or from *Rome*. The first *recorded* sentence uttered by the serpent appears to be a continuation, and a confirmative interrogation, in reference to something which had been previously asserted. As though the serpent had offered the fruit of the tree to the woman, and she had rejected it, saying she was prohibited from eating of the fruit of the tree ; and the serpent said, " Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" there was a manifest design to retain her in conversation. The woman yields to his indirect insinuation, couched in this question, and simply replies, " We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden ; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." Then the "*father of lies*" begins to speak like himself ; he boldly and impiously contradicts the assertion of God : " And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die ; for God doth know, that in

the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

Whether any thing more was said by way of proving to the woman her immortality, and the impossibility of her dying, we cannot say. But whether or not, the temptation and reasoning of the wicked one prevailed; for when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eye, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also to her husband, and he did eat. The fatal deed was now transacted. God was disobeyed and dishonoured. His law was trampled under foot. They believed a lying intruder rather than the God who had made them and blessed them with all things richly to enjoy. The misery and ruin consequent on this act of disobedience were tremendous. The wicked one probably expected to see justice instantly executed, without mercy; and, considering his own conduct and its consequences, this might have been the case. But there was a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, which made virtual atonement for the sin of the human race. The consequences of the fall, notwithstanding, were awful. God, in his justice, must manifest his righteous displeasure, and all the parties implicated in this rebellious transaction must be punished; not one of them escapes with impunity. But,

4. Let us turn our attention to the conduct of Adam and Eve after they had sinned.

(1.) They attempted to "hide themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden." Hence, though their eyes were opened to see their nakedness, their minds were beclouded with ignorance or

spiritual darkness. A consciousness of their moral wrong filled their souls with guilty fear. This fear or dread of the Divine approach confused their judgment ; and under the influence of terror and confusion, they vainly attempted to hide themselves. This conduct was a striking proof of their apostacy and degeneracy.

(2.) When questioned by his offended Maker—"Where art thou?"—as though he had said, What is the reason thou hast fled from my presence?—Adam, instead of acknowledging his guilt at once, and imploring mercy, gives further proof of his fallen condition, in the equivocal answer which he gave : "And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, *because I was naked*, and I hid myself." His nakedness was not the primary cause of his shame and condemnation ; but he seems to act and speak as though he could deceive the Almighty : "I was afraid, *because I was naked*." He ought to have said, I was afraid, *because I have sinned and rebelled against thee*.

Deception, fear, and falsehood still characterise the guilty posterity of the first apostate man.

(3.) When palpably charged with the crime he had committed, though obliged to acknowledge his transgression, he does it in such a way as to lead us to suppose that he expected mitigation, if not exoneration from punishment. "Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." It may be said this reply was substantially true, and therefore why blame Adam for thus replying to his enquiring, offended Maker? To this I would answer : If Adam had been the first transgressor,

and had taken the fruit without being tempted by any creature, he might have made an apology somewhat similar. He might have said, These eyes which thou gavest me first beheld the fruit on the tree which thou plantedst in the garden, and these hands which thou gavest me took the fruit, and I did eat. For after all his excuses relative to God and the woman which God gave him, it was his own personal act. He took the fruit when it was offered to him, and did eat, knowing at the same time, we presume, it was forbidden fruit. He was therefore justly condemned.

When God said to the woman, "What is this that thou hast done?" the woman replied, "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." She lays the blame upon *the Serpent*; not "*upon God and the Serpent*," as stated by a learned commentator, but upon "*the Serpent*." It is a piece of injustice to attribute sayings to Adam and Eve which they never uttered, and which is not implied in their excuses. Their conduct was bad enough, without making it worse than it really was. One commentator puts the following language into the mouth of Eve, or supposes her reply to import such sentiments. "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." *Comment*:—"Thou didst make him much wiser than thou didst make me; and therefore my simplicity and ignorance were overcome by his superior wisdom; I can have no fault here, the fault is his, and his who made him so wise and me so ignorant." To this comment I cannot subscribe. I admit the lack of confession, and that she made an effort to throw the blame upon the serpent; but her language does not imply that she, either directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, blamed her Maker,

in the way and manner imputed to her by the above comment. The manner in which Adam and Eve excused themselves is still practised by the generality of transgressors. They blame each other, blame the tempter, their own nature, or the circumstances in which they are placed. They have recourse to anything rather than confess to God, humble themselves under his mighty hand, and seek for pardon and reconciliation. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

## XIV. THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE FALL.

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Some of the consequences were immediate. The whole human race fell in Adam. The importance of this doctrine in relation to the universality of the atonement. The curse pronounced on Adam: he is doomed to labour and sorrow; driven from God, and sentenced to temporal death. All men by nature are morally and spiritually polluted. The phrase, "original sin," does not occur in the Bible, but the doctrine is taught there. The opinion of Pelagius, and the "Semi-Pelagians," considered. Their opinions, in the 5th century, spread rapidly and extensively. Unitarians hold substantially the same opinions on this subject as Pelagius. Vossius opposed Pelagianism. Dr. Pye Smith's idea on the visible virtue of the moral world. The moral aspect of our world at present in all nations. War and its abominations. The moral condition of the ancient heathen world, a proof of universal depravity. Dr. Leonard Wood, and the Rev. J. Fletcher. The word of God is clear on the doctrine of universal depravity. Everything that is good or virtuous in man is, by the sacred writers, attributed to grace; while on the other hand wickedness is ascribed to human nature. Depravity is not immediately infused into the human soul by our Creator. The absurdity and impiety of such a notion. Dr. Pye Smith on "Human Apostacy."

SOME of the consequences of man's apostacy were *immediate*. I mean such as related to the first transgressors, in reference to their earthly condition, the mortality of their bodies, the degradation of their minds, and the danger of being for ever lost; to which danger they had exposed their immortal souls. The remote consequences relate to the spread of sin and misery through the universal family

of man, to all succeeding generations, through time and never-ending eternity. For, when Adam fell, he being the natural head from whom we have all sprung, we fell in him, and consequently are polluted, and naturally prone to transgression. The doctrine just stated, though doubted by some and denied by others, is, we think, deducible from the Apostolic argument relative to the priesthood of Melchisedec. In the epistle to the Hebrews, vii. 9, 10, he says, "Levi . . . . . paid tithes in Abraham, for he was yet in the loins of his father when Melchisedec met him." The fact which is here stated is, that Levi, who was a descendant of Abraham, paid tithes to Melchisedec, *not actually, but through Abraham*, "he being in the loins of his father;" that is, Levi was *seminally* included in Abraham his forefather. Here is a divinely attested fact: Levi paid tithes, in the above sense, four hundred years before he was born. Now the conclusion, in reference to the subject under consideration is, that when Adam, the father of the human race, sinned, all his posterity sinned in him, not actually, but *seminally*, and consequently fell through him. A clear understanding of these facts are of the greatest importance, for when viewed theologically they stand in close relationship to the grand doctrine of the atonement, and to all the restorative means comprehended in the economy of divine grace. Had Adam retained his original purity and rectitude of character, whether he had continued on earth, or been removed to heaven, a Saviour would not have been needed. His native holiness and obedience would have ever secured the favour of his Maker; and his happiness would have been uninterrupted and abiding. But sin broke the link of spiritual affinity which existed



between him and his God, blighted and obliterated the nature of divine life in his soul, threw up a barrier between himself and the source of all good, placed him at an inconceivable moral distance from heaven, infused into his nature the elements of rebellion, and depraved his whole nature throughout body, soul, and spirit. We shall now notice particularly—

• 1. That God pronounced upon man a curse, which implies his mortality, and that while he continued in this world, he should live a life of toil and sorrow: “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” Gen. iii. 19. This sentence pronounced upon man, taken in connection with the preceding verse, clearly shews that physical toil, mental sorrow, and the death of the body, were the certain consequences of sin. We are not, however, to conclude from this, that man was originally brought into being to live in soft, inactive ease, and eternal tranquility. The position in which he was placed, and the power and authority with which he was invested, shew that he was ordained by his Maker for active life. Gen. i. 26-28. He was undoubtedly so constituted, in reference to both his physical and intellectual nature, that the exercise of his functions and attributes could be performed without sorrow or oppressive toil; and as he was constantly invigorated and renewed by eating of the tree of life, which, under God, was the appointed means of continual preservation, he had no distressing apprehensions of approaching mortality. But, on account of his sin, God prevented him from eating of the tree of life: “He drove out the man; and

placed, at the east side of the garden of Eden, cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." Gen. iii. 24. From this lovely and glorious spot of creation, man was driven, as with an angry blast, from before his incensed Creator, and doomed to incessant toil, "to till the ground," which for his sake was cursed with comparative barrenness, and at the end of his laborious life to co-mingle with the dust whence he was taken. The apostle Paul says: "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned." "The wages of sin is death." If it is therefore evident, from this history of man, and from the doctrine taught in the Word of God on this subject, that temporal death was one of the almost immediate consequences of sin; for, from the moment transgression was committed, man commenced a *dying life*. The seeds of mortality were sown in his nature; hence, he became frail, the subject of disease and pain, sickness and sorrow, physically depraved, and doomed to decay and death. And as population increases, diseases seem to multiply. Hence, what a nameless and countless multitude of dire diseases are constantly glutting the grave with their victims, and filling the world with mourning, lamentation, and woe.

If, therefore, the consequences of the fall were confined only to natural evil, and circumscribed within the narrow limits of time, they would be terrible. It must be admitted that a great deal of temporal punishment and physical suffering is the result of moral evil, and that if man's mind were not polluted, the amount of human suffering, arising from the circumstances of life, would not be a tithe, and perhaps not a hundredth part of what it now is; but

still the consequences of natural evil would be felt. Even among the most benevolent and virtuous of our race "sickness blasts and death devours," and all feel this world to be a vale of tears. If there were not an unrighteous man upon the face of the earth, still natural evil would be felt to be a serious inconvenience, and a source of pain and trial. But we have no need to indulge in this hypothetical kind of reasoning; for—

2. Man is morally and spiritually polluted. Sin has not only subjected him to labour and death, but has also defiled the spirit of his mind, and placed him in danger of eternal death, or the damnation of hell. That his moral nature is alienated from God, and degenerated from its original purity and happiness, is evident to every man's moral consciousness, as also from the most palpable facts displayed in the practical developments of man's moral nature. Hence, he feels guilt and shame, violent and malignant passions, in many instances aversion from God, sensuality of mind, and a loss of that fine delicacy of moral feeling and sentiment which is characteristic of holiness and moral purity. He feels in his immortal nature a sense of that severe penalty which was denounced against the transgressor—that he is not only doomed to temporal misery and corporeal death, but that he has also lost the Divine favour, is condemned by the law which he has broken, and is exposed to suffer in whatever way infinite justice and wisdom may approve. These consequences of the fall were not confined to the first transgressors. They reach every individual member of the human family. All are corrupted: "There is none righteous, no not one." There was a saying among the ancient Arabians, which shews that they

embraced this idea of human nature: "There is a black speck, though it may be no bigger than a bean's eye, in every soul, which, if once set a working, will overcloud the whole man into darkness, and something very like madness, and hurry him into the night of destruction."

It will be proper here to remark, that many learned men, both in ancient and modern times, have objected to the doctrine of original sin—namely, the sin of our first parents—polluting the whole human race. And it certainly is a fact worthy of our notice, that the phrase "original sin" does not occur in the whole compass of the Bible. But this fact is not sufficient to prove that the doctrine we have just stated is unscriptural or erroneous. The doctrine is substantially recorded, and the effects produced thereby are circumstantially detailed; and consequently we cannot or ought not to question the fact. The great matter of dispute has been, to what extent the first, or original, transgression has morally affected the human race. Pelagius, who developed his principles early in the fifth century, maintained that the consequences of Adam's sin were confined to his own person, and that new born infants are in the same situation as was Adam before the fall. To this faith he gained many converts in Asia, Africa, and Europe; and the followers of Cassian, priest of Marseilles, who were called "semi-Pelagians," asserted that "man, *before he received grace*, was capable of faith and holy desires." And we are told that in the fifth century "this doctrine was received by the Greek Church and other Eastern Christians, and also prevailed much, and continued to divide the Western Churches." Many Unitarians hold the same sentiments with Pelagius and Cassian, and

strongly maintain that a new born child is *naturally* pure and free from moral guilt.

In answer to this notion, *Vossius*, in his "History of Pelagianism," assures us that the whole Catholic Church, before the days of Pelagius, was always of opinion that the guilt of Adam's sin was imputed to his posterity, to their condemnation, so that children dying therein were consigned to everlasting punishment or separation from God. This is contradicted by Taylor, Whitby, and others. However the case may be, our opinion must not be determined by the ancient fathers, and we have no just reason to believe that any child does die *in original sin*. "The Lamb of God" hath atoned for, and taken away, "*the sin of the world*;" and through the merits of the Saviour, little children are admitted into the kingdom of heaven. This we may safely infer from the words of Christ: "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God." Mark x. 14. But, in order to prove that the effects of Adam's sin was confined to himself, and did not affect his posterity, some have gone so far as to assert, that "the sum of virtue in the world greatly preponderates against the aggregate of vice." But this conclusion involves in it, either a great amount of ignorance, or the most deplorable moral insensibility, in reference to the nature of virtue and the awful amount of vice. Dr. Pye Smith says: "It results from looking merely at external appearances of what may be useful or pleasing to fellow-criminals; and disregarding the selfishness and Atheism of motives." That, undoubtedly, is one reason; but I think, if even motives be left out of the question, the practical manifestations of

vice greatly preponderate against the external appearances of virtue. Look at idolatry, with all its degrading concomitants, nameless licentiousness, consummate cruelty, priestly selfishness, and palpable falsehood, associated with its brutalising superstition, revolting ceremonies, and bloody rites ; idolatry—whether of an intellectual and metaphysical kind, or of a gross and illiterate character, whether among Pagans, Mahommedans, or professed Christians—is fraught with moral evil, and repugnant to revelation and the dictates of enlightened reason. And, that idolatry abounds to an awful extent, is abundantly evident to every person who is at all acquainted with the moral and spiritual condition of the human race. Look at continental India, China, and Japan, the Peninsula of Malacca, Africa, Siberia, &c., how idolatry is incorporated with every sacred rite and religious ceremony, whether Pagan, Mahommedan, or semi-Christian. Australasia and Polynesia exhibit no brighter aspect. Many of the inhabitants of the two great continents of America are worshippers of idols, and Christianity in Europe is, in every country, highly tainted with this abomination. Popery is a modified system of idolatry, wherever it exists. The founders and builders of the Papacy have evidently ransacked every system, whether ancient or modern, Jewish, Pagan, Mahommedan, or Christian, and have selected from the whole, irrespective of truth and virtue, any element, doctrine, precept, or practice, which might serve to prop up their fragile superstructure which, notwithstanding all the splendour of its outward appearance, is destined to perish. Unhappily, in the collection of the vast mass of materials which Popery has incorporated with its heterogeneous system, a prepon-

derating quantity of it tends to idolatry. Godly simplicity of mind, and holiness of conduct and character, form no essential part of Popery. This being the case, it forms one gigantic mass of vice and moral evil, with a very small portion of virtue.

Look again at war, with all its characteristic abominations; it is a mighty and enormous manifestation of human depravity. Whatever may be said in justification of, or by way of palliating, defensive war, it must be admitted by every virtuous and well informed mind, that war is a great evil, and a curse to our race; and the consequences thereof are of the most debasing and demoralizing kind. It has been stated, on good authority, that war has destroyed as many human beings as would people our world, according to the present number of inhabitants, fourteen times; or, in other words, fourteen thousand millions of human beings have been deprived of life through war. And then think of the awful amount of suffering, loss of property, and all the demoralizing effects resulting from the operations of war; reason is shocked, and the heart sickens over such contemplations. And if we turn from these popular and palpable evils, and look at moral character as developed in higher civilised life, we cannot fail to discover, even in the general habits and manners of what is called "polite and refined society," a leading propensity to vice; and in many instances crimes of deepest dye are perpetrated in the highest walks of life. What, I ask, is there in human nature—in the practical operations and developments of the human mind, apart from saving grace—to counterbalance this awful amount of palpable wickedness, the aggregate of which can never be fully described?

Comparatively nothing. What were the learned nations of antiquity, with their refinement and intellectual elevation, without Christianity? Let the disciples of Pelagius consider and answer this. What was the moral state of ancient Rome, Corinth, and Athens, which were so famous for wealth, learning, and civilization? It is well known to every person who is acquainted with either sacred or profane history, that they were *morally bad*—not a whit better than the less celebrated cities of the pagan world. They lacked common humanity, and sympathy for the poor and the destitute; hence, bad as the great bulk of people are in this country, on a fair comparison they are vastly superior to the ancient heathen. And this superiority of moral feeling can be attributed to nothing but the grace of God, as revealed in the gospel of Christ. Let this be withdrawn, and the pure and high-toned moral feeling which gives exercise to disinterested charity, would soon fluctuate, wither, droop, and expire; which clearly shews that evangelical virtue and moral purity are not attributes of human nature, but principles of grace.

Another important fact, which comes within the range of our daily observation, in confirmation of the universal depravity of human nature, is the *uniform* indications of inward depravity which we witness in children, in the very infancy of their existence; and the great difficulty, if not the absolute impossibility, we generally experience in infusing sound moral principles into their minds. Children, in early life, seem to manifest a leading propensity to evil, and a natural aversion to that which is good. In the unfolding of their moral nature, they generally display a readiness and peculiar facility of acquiring the habits of



vice, which shews that moral evil is a native disease of their minds. We allow that, in this particular, there is a marked difference, at least so far as outward appearances go; but the dispositions generally exhibited are sufficient to afford clear evidence of native and inherent depravity. On this subject Dr. Leonard Woods, in his "Letters to Unitarians," page 152, reasons very conclusively, and appeals, like Fletcher, to "*matters of fact.*" And, indeed, it is a matter-of-fact question, consequently all attempts at overturning it, either by learned or illiterate men, is labour in vain—a war with God and truth. For—

The Word of God most positively reveals, in unmistakable and conclusive language, the fact of man's moral depravity. It was manifested in the cruel conduct of Cain, in slaying his innocent and unoffending brother. And we read, in Gen. vi. 5: "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." After the flood, when Noah offered sacrifice to God of every clean fowl, "The Lord said, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil *from his youth.*" Gen. viii. 21. "What is man that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous? Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." Job xv. 14; and Psalm li. 5. "The heart is deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked, who can know it?" Jer. xvii. 9. From the many expressions used by the inspired writers to delineate the fall and depravity of human nature, the following are selected: "A seed of evil doers; children that are corruptors, who have sinned

against the Lord our God; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others; they are corrupt; they have done abominable works; there is none that doeth good; they are all gone aside; they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no not one. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; and the whole world lieth in wickedness. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; for there is none upright among men. There is not a just man upon the earth, that doeth good and sinneth not. The Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world become guilty before God." See Isaiah i. 4; Jer. iii. 25; Eph. ii. 3; Psalm xiv. 1, 3; Isaiah liii. 6; Micah vii. 2; Eccl. vii. 20; Prov. xx. 9; Luke xvii. 1; 1 John v. 19; i. 8; Rom. iii. 9-19; Gal. iii. 22; and James iii. 2.

The Word of God abounds with passages of similar import. Many learned authors have laboured to prove that the passages above cited, and all of similar meaning, refer to man's practical transgressions, and have no reference to his native depravity. But the language of inspiration on this subject is too plain and conclusive to be overturned by any human argument, however skilfully managed. However the false reasoning of men may misconstrue divine truth, it can never be altered: "The Word of the Lord abideth forever." We are reminded, that in many places Scripture speaks of virtue as being associated with the character of men. Granted; but whenever the Word of God represents holiness of character in the life and conduct of men, such holiness is ascribed to grace,

and not to nature ; and the individuals possessing such holiness are uniformly spoken of as exceptions to the unrenewed part of mankind. While, on the other hand, wickedness of every kind is recorded as affording legitimate specimens of human nature ; because it is the spontaneous result, and unchecked effusions, of our fallen and polluted nature. This is a fact which no sensible and candid reader of the Bible will attempt to disprove, and which clearly proves, beyond all successful contradiction, that man by nature, as well as by practice, is a fallen, sinful being. Any attempt at disproving this doctrine is only another confirmation of this awful fact, and an illustration of the consequent folly. Vain and depraved man fain would be wise and pure ; though man is born like a wild ass's colt, and goeth astray as soon as he is born. (See Watts on the Ruin and Recovery of Mankind, and MacLean on Original Sin, vol. ii., page 144, Edinb. Ed.)

We conclude, then, that all moral evil, ruin, misery, and disgrace, which now exists amongst mankind, and all the punishment due to sin in the future life, is *traceable* to original sin, or man's fall from his primal, glorious condition. Moral as well as physical depravity being natural and hereditary to the posterity of Adam, all mankind are involved in the consequences of this moral aberration from God. To suppose that moral evil is immediately infused into man's nature by the Creator, is an hypothesis repugnant to reason, and inconsistent with the perfections of the Divine character. On the other hand, it is a well known fact, developed in thousands of instances, that not only physical but moral and intellectual qualities are hereditary. Beside, for God to make man evil and depraved, and then

to punish him because or on account of that depravity, would be incompatible with both justice and wisdom, not to mention benevolence. The depravity of infants can be attributed to the fall of our first parents, and the laws of natural generation only. The adoption of this hypothesis is in harmony with the well known fact, that infants, incapable of actual sin, suffer and die. We have before proved, that such suffering and death are the natural result of original sin; we may therefore safely infer, that moral suffering, and spiritual death also, are effects of the same cause. In fact, all the evil in the universe is the consequence of sin. See Dr. Pye Smith, on the "Apostacy of Man," (F.L. of Theol. page 380, &c.) where this subject is ably discussed, and from which we extract the following quotation. On this intricate, and complicated subject, the Doctor remarks: "This doctrine does not imply such an imputation as would be expressed by saying that the holy and adorable God esteems the posterity of Adam as having actually done that which he did. The judgment of God cannot but be according to *fact* and *truth*. The sin or the holiness of another being cannot be made ours by any species of transfer; but only by *participation*, in the way of resemblance, or consent, or adoption, or imitation. The fact of such participation is established by the ample evidence of human *depravity*. That which we have now laid down is the *ground*, or *prior reason* in the Divine equity, for such a practical constitution of things in relation to the first man and his posterity. As the intrinsic excellency (=merit) of the Saviour's obedience is such as *entitles* Him to the reward of such honour and happiness as accrues from the bestowment of the eternal, divine, and holy life on all

whom he designates as his own ; that is, all who, by a holy and *mind-uniting* (=participating) faith are *one* with Him ; so the violation of the covenant by Adam had, by an appointment of Divine justice and wisdom which we can but imperfectly comprehend, the effect of separating from the fountain of life, of dissolving whatever would have been the springs and causes of holiness, or *moral advantages*, to his posterity, and of freedom from physical evils. Hence a subjection to depravity and death, and to other consequences more or less intense according to the degree of *actual* sinfulness ; and there is that connection between Adam and his posterity, by the constitution of moral government under which God, in his perfect rectitude, goodness, and wisdom, saw fit to place them, which is the ground or reason of those consequences." Page 383.

## XV. MAN'S RESTORATION AND SALVATION.

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Man cannot by any means restore himself. Human redemption not the work of Angels, or of any created beings. Christ the only Saviour of the world. Atonement, Propitiation, Redemption, and Reconciliation. Was it absolutely necessary that Christ should die? History of Redemption. To what extent redemption was made known to the Antideluvians. Abel's offering. Animal sacrifices considered. Vicarious sacrifice. Jewish sacrifices were typical of Christ's. "The fulness of time" considered.

In connection with this great and glorious theme there are several particulars which claim our distinct and careful consideration. It may be proper to shew—

*First.* That man could not by any means restore and save himself. None but the most degenerate of our race could suppose that man, who is, in his moral and spiritual nature, totally ruined, could devise means to rectify and renew his own polluted and entirely depraved nature—as soon could the dead man bring himself to life again. Yet, strange to say, every age has produced a generation wise in their own eyes: men who have contended for the dignity and power of humanity, and have maintained the possibility of fallen man's self-restoration to his pristine purity and honour, by his own natural, unassisted powers. The schemes which they have generally invented or adopted have been some kind of education and intellectual training, together with the adoption of certain political measures and social regulations. Many of these educa-

apostate man to his offended Creator. The nature of the transgression, and the punishment threatened against the transgressor, viewed in connection with the punishment and condition of fallen angels, we may reasonably judge, would prevent angels from making any attempt at restoration in the case of human apostacy. And had the attempt been made by the angelic host, we have no reason to believe that it would have been successful. "Without shedding of blood is no remission." Angels are spiritual, and consequently have no blood to shed. But, supposing the angelic nature to have been united with the nature of man, so as to have met this requirement, even then, this *angelic-man* could not have borne the overwhelming pressure of human guilt, the consuming fire of God's infinite justice, and the rage of devils, all of which were endured by the Saviour of the world.

Divine justice required that infinite attributes, associated with humanity, should be engaged in this great work; and that a bleeding sacrifice of infinite value should be offered up ere the work of redemption and salvation could be accomplished. Hence, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." 2 Cor. v. 19. This leads us to consider—

*Thirdly.* That the great work of human redemption was by Jesus Christ. His nature and character have been discussed in the preceding pages, in which it was shewn, that he is very God, one in essence and nature with the Father, or Lord of all; and that he assumed our nature for the purpose of making atonement for sin and restoring man to the favour of his offended Creator. We shall therefore now examine—

The divine character of the great atonement by Jesus Christ. The first particular to which I would call the attention of the reader is, that in this great and glorious work the ever-blessed and adorable Trinity have graciously condescended to be engaged. Hence, it is sometimes said, "God the Father redeemed the world by Jesus Christ." By which we are to understand, that the love of God was the grand moving cause of man's redemption. Hence, the Saviour says: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, . . . not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." John iii. 16, 17. In this the love of God was manifested towards us in a peculiar and extraordinary sense. The connection of the Father with the work of the Son is distinctly stated in Scripture: for example, "It pleased the Father that in him (Jesus Christ) should all fulness dwell, and by him, to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." Col. i. 19, 20. Peter, speaking of Christ, says: "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him." "Him being delivered up by the determined counsel and fore-knowledge of God, and by wicked hands being crucified and slain, God hath raised up; and that same Jesus who was thus crucified, God hath made both Lord and Christ." And "Him God hath exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." Acts ii. 22-36; v. 31. "Him God hath set at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to



come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the Church." Eph. i. 20-22. "Thus God hath redeemed his people; as he spake by the mouth of the holy prophets," &c. Luke i. 68-70. We, therefore, see that the work of redemption is not to be considered as the work of Jesus Christ exclusively and apart from the Father. Some authors, who have written on this subject, while they would exhibit the Son as the impersonation of love and mercy, represent the Father, in contradistinction from him, as a Being of stern and vindictive justice, whose burning wrath nothing but the blood-shedding and death of his Son could appease. This is exhibiting the personal distinction of the Trinity, as though they were separated individuals, of opposite purposes and feelings, which is altogether an unwarranted representation; for there cannot be any disagreement in the Divine Mind. The purposes and designs of the Father are in harmony with the purposes, designs, and feelings of the Son. But while we admit this, it is an indisputable fact, that Jesus Christ, in his twofold nature, in his sufferings and death, procured our redemption. On this subject St. Peter says: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." 1 Peter i. 18, 19. Having made these preliminary remarks, we shall now consider—

I. What is implied in human redemption.

II. The history of redemption, and the manner in which it was accomplished.

### III. The extent of the Atonement.

1. What redemption is. Various words are used in Scripture to describe the work which was done by the Saviour of the world to restore and reconcile man to God. In reference to their etymological signification, they are words of somewhat different import ; but they are used by the sacred writers to point out or denote substantially the same thing, or, to speak more accurately, some particular operation or effect, relative to the same subject. I refer to such words and phrases as—

(1.) The *atonement*, which literally signifies *to be at one*. But, as used in many places in Scripture, and by theologians generally, it refers to the means by which God and man become reconciled, namely through the sacrifice and intercession of Christ.

(2.) The word *propitiation* is often used to denote the great atoning sacrifice offered up by Jesus Christ, because it atoned for and covered our guilt as the mercy-seat did the tables of the law. Christ underwent the penalty in the room of the guilty, and thereby averted the punishment due to sinners. Hence, the sacrifice of himself is called the “*Propitiation* or *Atonement*” for the sins of the world, and we are said to be saved “through faith in his blood.” Rom. iii. 25 ; John ii. 2 ; iv. 10.

(3.) The word *redemption* is also frequently used to signify substantially the same thing, though its literal meaning is, *to buy*, or *buy again*. Hence, we are said to be purchased with his own blood, “bought with a price,” and redeemed to God by the blood of Christ. See Acts xx. 28 ; 1 Cor. vi. 20 ; Rev. v. 9.

(4.) *Reconciliation* is another word employed by the

sacred writers to describe our restoration to the favour and enjoyment of God. Hence, God is said to have reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ. 2 Cor. v. 18. St. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, expresses himself very clearly on this subject: "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a *propitiation* through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Rom. iii. 24, 25, 26. In this passage we see man represented as a sinner; namely, a transgressor of the divine law, and consequently by that law condemned. He is incapable of saving himself; God in mercy has provided an all-sufficient remedy—a Lamb for an offering—a Lamb of his own providing, virtually slain from the foundation of the world, revealed in due time; and through faith in this propitiatory sacrifice God bestows pardon, and thereby Christ becomes our Redeemer and Saviour. The price which he pays for our redemption is his own blood, as the apostle Peter emphatically asserts: "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot."

In the nature and work of redemption there is a divine mystery—a mystery too profound for created minds to comprehend. What considerations swayed the Divine Mind in this stupendous affair, we cannot say. In this sublime theme were displayed the grand and awful operations of the Divine counsel, "which things angels desire to

look into." But, as one of our poets very correctly says,—

"In vain the first-born seraph tries  
To sound the depths of love divine;  
'Tis mystery all; let earth adore;  
Let angel minds enquire no more."

The following question on the above subject is sometimes asked:—"Could not the Almighty, in his sovereign power, have saved the human race without the humiliation and death of his Son Jesus Christ? On this subject we might remark—

1. It is not the province of human reason to determine this awful question; and to indulge in speculative theories, merely to gratify the curiosity of inquisitive minds, is presumption, and tremendously dangerous. It is right for man to exercise his mind and reasoning capabilities in every legitimate way, but he should not presume to go beyond the written Word of God. What God has been pleased to reveal, we should gladly receive; and for further manifestations of his purposes, and grand designs, we must wait—

"Till glory breaks upon our view,  
In brighter worlds above."

The light of heaven may unravel many mysteries, which are now beyond our knowledge and comprehension.

2. Whatever God does is perfectly right, though we cannot understand it. He is "*too wise to err*," as well as "*too good to be unkind*." And as the work of redemption by Jesus Christ is of Divine ordination, we may rest perfectly satisfied that the plan he has adopted, in this wonderful

dispensation of grace, is most for his own glory and our benefit. And, according to the light we have on this subject, in reference to the nature of the transgression, the character of the divine attributes, &c., no other means could have been devised. God himself must do the work, and do it in such a way and manner as becometh the dignity and glory of an all-perfect and infinitely wise Being. And in the plan which God, in his infinite wisdom, has devised, we behold a revelation of his boundless mercy, a manifestation of his inflexible justice, a display of his spotless purity or holiness, a development of his uncompounded goodness, the most sublime illustrations of his righteousness and long-suffering; and the whole scheme, from the first intimation of a Saviour (immediately after the fall), to the consummation of the glorious work, irradiated with infinite wisdom. Hence, the whole work, in its origin, in its manifestations, and in its completion, is in harmony with the perfections and infinite dignity of the Divine character, and will through everlasting ages ascribe "glory to God in the highest."

3. Another particular, in relation to this subject, which claims our distinct attention, is what may be termed the history of redemption: I mean the manner in which it has been revealed and finally accomplished. In divine revelation, we discover a series of grand and glorious events, resulting from the operations of the great Eternal Mind, evidently designed to terminate in the glorious consummation of human redemption. And these revelations and manifestations of the Divine Mind are now subjects of sacred history, in which the riches of divine grace, and the infinite depths and heights of God's wisdom, are set forth in the most engaging manner.

To what extent the plan of human redemption was made known to Adam, and the early generations of mankind, we are not prepared to say. The Mosaic history of the Antideluvians consists of little more than a genealogical account of the succession of the heads of families from Adam to Noah, and a brief statement of the universal depravity of mankind, which was the forerunner and cause of the universal deluge. The sacred historian does not furnish us with any particular definition of primitive theology, in the same way as he relates the peculiar characteristics of the Jewish religion. But from the fact of righteous Abel's bringing to God "the firstlings of his flock" as an offering, it is reasonable to suppose that the appointment of sacrifices for sin formed a part of the gracious revelation made to Adam after his transgression. As Scott observes, "it is exceedingly difficult, in any way, to account for the use of altars and sacrifices, in appeasing the anger of the offended Deity, which has prevailed, almost in all ages and nations, and which does not appear to have its origin from any deductions of human reason. But if God commanded Adam, after the fall, to shed the blood of innocent animals, and to consume part or the whole of their bodies by fire—representing thereby the punishment merited by sin, in and after death, and prefiguring the sufferings of Christ—then the whole is intelligible. The original tradition was remembered, and the method of expiation practised, long after the meaning of it was obscured or forgotten." And it is worthy of remark, that this opinion is not without foundation in the inspired volume. The apostle says: "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." Why, it may

be asked, was his sacrifice more excellent? Because, in the first place, it was more suitable in its nature to typify the great sacrifice which was to be offered up to make universal atonement for the sins of the whole world. But secondly, and more especially, because it was offered up in faith. Cain undoubtedly believed in God, as his Creator and providential Benefactor, and therefore brought an offering by way of acknowledging his gratitude and obligation; but there is no evidence that he believed in a promised Saviour, nor came to God as a sinner to supplicate mercy through him; and therefore he did not bring a suitable sacrifice to prefigure the suffering Lamb of God, who in due time died to redeem the human race. Under these two considerations his offering was rejected. "But God had respect unto Abel and to his offering," because—

1. It was offered *in faith*. By this sacrifice Abel acknowledged he was a sinner, and that he believed in the covenant of mercy through the promised seed; and therefore his sacrifice was not only accepted, but distinguished by certain manifestations of divine approval. It is supposed by some theologians, that it was consumed by fire from heaven; "which intimated that deserved vengeance consumed the sacrifice, and made way for the exercise of mercy to the offender." (M. Ruff.) On this subject Dr. Clarke remarks, "that Abel, besides his *Minchah*, or gratitude offering, brought also *thusia*, a victim, to be slain for his sins; and this he chose out of the first-born of his flock, which in the order of God was a representation of the Lamb of God that was to take away the sin of the world." And what further confirms this exposition is the observation of the apostle, "God testifying of his *gifts*,"

which certainly shews that he brought more than *one*. Some learned men have objected to the doctrine that animal sacrifices were of divine appointment, which objection is grounded on several passages of Scripture. The practice also, in their judgment, was contrary to any lesson taught by nature.

Great stress has been laid on the following passage : " I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them, in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices ; but this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people." Jer. vii. 22, 23. But this in all probability refers exclusively to the transaction at Marah (Exodus xv. 23-26), at which time God spake nothing concerning sacrifices. It certainly cannot be intended to contradict the whole book of Leviticus, which is full of such appointments. On this subject Dr. Doddridge remarks : " According to the genius of the Hebrew language, one thing seems to be forbidden and another commanded, when the meaning only is, that the latter is generally to be preferred to the former." Of the correctness of this remark, we might refer to several remarkable passages. (See Hosea vi. 6 ; Isaiah xliii. 22 ; Joel ii. 13 ; Matt. vi. 19, 20 ; Luke xii. 4, 5 ; John vi. 27 ; and Col. iii. 2.) We may therefore conclude, that the meaning of those passages where sacrifices seem to be prohibited, and practical duties inculcated, is, that the latter is preferred to the former. " To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice." Prov. xxi. 3. " I will have mercy and not sacrifice."



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we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord

hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Isa. liii. 4, 5, 6.

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but, viewed in relation to the Saviour, they all have their

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 Could give the labouring conscience peace, or wash away one

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the work of redemption till the period of the world's  
history arrived when the promised Saviour assumed our  
nature, and died to atone for the sin of the world. Per-  
haps the most important fact in connection with this  
apparent delay is, that during the 4000 years between the  
original promise and the fulfilment of that promise, many  
glorious revelations were made, and sublime predictions  
uttered, which referred to Christ and the work of redemp-  
tion; and when these predictions met with their accom-  
plishment, and the promises with their fulfilment, then the  
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with by Christ the great antitype, which gave to the whole  
history of redemption, and all the types and ceremonies  
comprehended in the grand scheme, a *divine character*, and

Matt. ix. 13. In the Old Testament there are many passages of similar import.

The Jewish sacrifices, which were of divine appointment, were certainly typical of Christ, who offered up himself as a *vicarious sacrifice*. And the ancient Jews regarded their bloody or animal sacrifices not only as propitiatory, but as vicarious also; i.e. the victims offered up were substituted satisfactions. And Christ, the great antitype, was our substitute: "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; . . . . . he was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Isa. liii. 4, 5, 6. "He bore our sins in his own body upon the tree." "By the grace of God he tasted death for every man." Hence the thousands of innocent victims which bled on Jewish altars were living and dying representations of Christ the heavenly Lamb. Apart from Christ, they were nothing but pompous and unmeaning ceremonies, totally unworthy of God, and inconsistent with his wisdom and benevolence; but, viewed in relation to the Saviour, they all have their significance.

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The ceremonial law and the prophetic Scriptures abound

with references and allusions to the great work of atonement. These revelations would prepare the minds of the people for a more glorious and enlightened dispensation: "And in the fulness of time, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Gal. iv. 4, 5.

It is a fact worthy of our particular attention, that between the first promise of a Saviour, and the fulfilment of that promise, there were 4000 years, which to some who have thought on the subject has been a matter of astonishment. Why, it has been asked, was not the Saviour immediately given? To this question we might answer: Because it seemed good to the all-wise God to act otherwise. Many reasons have been assigned by learned men, professing to shew the wisdom of God in not completing the work of redemption till the period of the world's history arrived when the promised Saviour assumed our nature, and died to atone for the sin of the world. Perhaps the most important fact in connection with this apparent delay is, that during the 4000 years between the original promise and the fulfilment of that promise, many glorious revelations were made, and sublime predictions uttered, which referred to Christ and the work of redemption; and when these predictions met with their accomplishment, and the promises with their fulfilment, then the Levitical ordinances, types, and ceremonies were dispensed with by Christ the great antitype, which gave to the whole history of redemption, and all the types and ceremonies comprehended in the grand scheme, a *divine character*, and

proved it to be the great and only system or order of things ordained by God to restore and elevate fallen man to happiness and heaven. Had the Saviour been actually given, immediately after the fall, the evidence of his true divinity, and the divine character of his atonement, could not have been so amply and conclusively demonstrated as it now is. It would have been a subject of history only; and to history so remote, we know from many existing facts, many weighty objections might have been raised. But now it is a matter of prophecy, as well as of history; and prophecies the most minute, in reference to events and periods, have met with their actual and literal accomplishment in the life and death of our Redeemer, which clearly proves the work to be of God. And when, in the judgment of the infinitely wise God, the proper period arrived for the personal appearance of the true Messiah, the second person in the adorable Godhead assumed human nature, and was found in fashion as a man. In a former essay we considered the Supreme Divinity of the Saviour; we shall now refer to his Incarnation, and shew that it was necessary that he should be a perfect man as well as God; and then we shall endeavour to point out the manner in which redemption was accomplished by him.

## XVI. REDEMPTION BY CHRIST.

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**It was necessary that the Saviour should be a perfect man. The Redeemer must shed his blood and die. The Saviour's humanity clearly asserted in Scripture. His Divinity also predicated. The doctrine of the Cross implies a vicarious sacrifice. The death of Christ an act of obedience—voluntary. The death of Christ abolished legal and typical sacrifices. The death of Christ confirmed the New Covenant, and superseded the old one. The atonement made by Christ manifests the justice of God. The burial of Christ's body a fulfilment of divine prediction, and proved the reality of his death. The manner in which he was buried. His burial a proof of his humility. The resurrection of Christ demonstrated him to be the Son of God—an earnest of the general resurrection. The resurrection of Christ has been disputed and denied. It is an historical fact that his grave was found empty; how is this to be accounted for? Quotation from Saurin. Testimony borne to the resurrection of Christ. The validity of this testimony. The resurrection of the Saviour, a glorious miracle.**

**In a former part of this work we have adduced a number of arguments in proof of the Divinity of Christ. We shall therefore now proceed to shew that the Saviour was man as well as God. The necessity of this will appear evident, when we consider that atonement must be made for sin in the very nature that had offended and violated the divine law; besides, pure Divinity, unaccompanied with humanity, could not meet the requirement of Divine justice: "Without shedding of blood is no remission" of sins. But Divinity, considered abstractedly, could neither suffer nor shed blood. That the shedding of blood is necessary, in order**

to make atonement, is abundantly evident from the following passages of Scripture: "The life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls." Lev. xvii. 11. And when Christ instituted the holy Supper, he took the cup, which contained "the fruit of the vine," an emblem of his blood, and he said: "This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Matt. xxvi. 28. St. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, says: "God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us; much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." Rom. v. 8, 9. To the Ephesians, speaking of Christ, he says: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Eph. i. 7. The same divine truth is stated in his epistle to the Colossians (i. 13, 14), where he asserts that God the Father "hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son; in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." In the epistle to the Hebrews the same truth is asserted. Speaking of the Priesthood of Christ, the apostle says: "By his own blood he hath entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*; for if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" Heb. ix. 12, 14. In the 22nd verse of the same chapter he emphatically states,

“without shedding of blood is no remission.” St. John says: “The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” 1 John i. 7. The same apostle, in Rev. i. 5, 6, when speaking of Jesus Christ, says: “Unto him that loved us, and washed us in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen.”

As our redemption was effected by the shedding of his blood, the person whose blood was shed, and who offered himself as a vicarious sacrifice, must have a nature capable of bleeding and dying, as well as a nature of infinite perfections to sustain him, and to give infinite value to the sacrifice thus offered up. Now, in Jesus Christ we see this twofold nature: “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” The second person in the glorious Godhead became incarnate, and “being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” That God the Son came down from heaven, and took our nature upon him that he might suffer in our stead, redeem us from all iniquity, and save us from eternal misery, is evidently taught in the following passages: “The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” Matt. xx. 28. “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. As the Father knoweth me, even so I know the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. . . . . Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it up again.” John x. 11, 15, 17. “While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Rom. v. 8. “For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also



received, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures." 1 Cor. xv. 3. "Grace be unto you, and peace, from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins." Gal. i. 3, 4. In a manner equally explicit, are similar declarations in every part of the New Testament. See Gal. ii. 20; Eph. v. 2, 25; Col. i. 21, 22; 1 Tim. ii. 6; Heb. ix. 26; x. 5-10; 1 Peter ii. 21; iii. 18.

That Christ, the Son of God—who, in his Divine essence and attributes, is one with the Father—had a human nature, is evident from the following passages, which, for the sake of making the subject as plain as possible, we shall classify in the following order:—

1. He was, according to divine promise, "the seed of the woman," (Gen. iii. 15), and in due time he was born of the blessed Virgin; Matt. i. 16, 18; Matt. ii. 2, 4, 11; Luke ii. 7, 11; Gal. iv. 4.

2. He was called the "seed of Abraham," and the "seed of David;" Gen. xxii. 18; 2 Sam. vii. 12, 16; Psalm lxxxix. 35, 36; 2 Tim. ii. 8.

3. He is called "a child born—a Son given," and "a man;" Isaiah ix. 6; Isaiah xxxii. 2.

4. It is said that "he increased in wisdom and in stature;" Luke ii. 52.

5. He was the subject of hunger and thirst, weariness and temptation; Matt. iv. 2; Matt. xxii. 18, 19; John iv. 7; John xix. 28; John iv. 6; Matt. viii. 24; Mark iv. 38.

6. He had a human soul, of like passions with us (yet without sin); hence, he was tempted, he grieved, and suffered extreme sorrow of soul; Luke xix. 41; John

xi. 35 ; Matt. iv. 1-10 ; Matt. xxvi. 38 ; Luke xxiii. 26 ; Acts ii. 31.

7. As a man, his body and soul were disunited by death : " Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," (i.e. in the invisible and separate state,) " neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption," (his body to be reduced to putrefaction); Acts ii. 27 ; see also Luke xxiii. 33, 46 ; and John xix. 30.

8. He is called " The son of man;" Matt. viii. 20 ; xxv. 31 ; Mark ii. 28 ; viii. 38 ; Luke xxi. 26 ; John iii. 13, 14 ; v. 27, and in many other places. " The second man ;" 1 Cor. xv. 47. " The last Adam ;" 1 Cor. xv. 45. " The holy child ;" Acts iv. 30. And "*Man*;" Acts xvii. 31 ; 1 Tim. ii. 5 ; and Heb. x. 12. This same person, as touching his Godhead, is designated " The Mighty God, Emmanuel, the everlasting Father ;" Isaiah vii. 14 ; ix. 6. " The Holy One of Israel;" xi. 14. " Jehovah our Righteousness ;" Isaiah xxiii. 6. He is also designated "*God*," " The true God," " The express image of his person," " God manifest in the flesh," " God our Saviour," " God, blessed for ever more," " Lord of all," " The Lord of glory," " The King of kings and Lord of lords." Acts vii. 59 ; 2 Peter i. 1 ; John v. 20 ; Acts xx. 28 ; 2 Tim. iii. 16, with 1 Peter i. 10, 11 ; Titus i. 3 ; Heb. i. 3 ; Rom ix. 5 ; Acts x. 36 ; 1 Cor. ii. 8 ; and Rev. xvii. 14.

9. When speaking of the union of his two natures, he is called " God, who purchased the Church with his own blood ;" Acts xx. 28 ; 1 Peter i. 19. " The Son of God," " The Son of the Highest," " The only-begotten of the Father," &c. It is therefore clear, from these passages of Scripture, that the Redeemer of mankind was both Divine

and human—very God, and yet real man—God from all eternity, and man in the fulness of time—was qualified in human nature to suffer, and to offer up an atoning sacrifice by the shedding of his blood.

As the glorious gospel of the ever-blessed God chiefly consists in a relation, or the publication, of what Christ has done, as the *substitute* and *representative* of guilty man, in his death, resurrection, ascension, and intercession ; and as these glorious transactions form the grand basis or groundwork of man's restoration and eternal salvation ; it may not be out of place, nor superfluous, to make a few distinct remarks on each of these particulars.

*First.* THE DEATH OF CHRIST. St. Paul says to the Corinthians : “ I delivered unto you *first of all* that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures.” 1 Cor. xv. 3. On this subject we might remark—

1. The *vicarious* death of Christ is one of the most important articles in the Christian Creed. The grand theme of Apostolic preaching was “ Christ Crucified.” The whole of the gospel is so closely connected with this subject, that its doctrines are usually denominated, “ The doctrines of the Cross.” St. Paul says : “ God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Gal. vi. 14. “ For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified.” 1 Cor. ii. 2. And all evangelical ministers since the apostolic age, whether learned or unlearned, have given the doctrines of the Cross a prominent place in their ministerial functions. The death of Christ for sinners is the grand centre of the sacred system, to which all the lines of the vast circum-

ference converge. Amidst all the changes of church polity, and modes of ecclesiastical government—amidst all the minor differences involved in human creeds, and speculative theories of men—the faithful minister holds to the Cross, and the ever-during glories of its essential doctrines. To the beautiful and significant sentiments of the poet he can heartily subscribe—

“In the Cross of Christ I glory, towering o’er the wrecks of time ;  
All the light of sacred story gathers round its head sublime.”

2. In consequence of our Saviour’s mediatorial relation to God and man, his dying for sinners was an act of *obedience* to the will and requirements of his heavenly Father. And this obedience may be regarded as standing in opposition to the *disobedience* of the first transgressor, and counteracting it. This sentiment is significantly expressed by St. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans: “For as by one man’s *disobedience* many were made sinners, so by the *obedience* of one shall many be made righteous.” Rom. v. 19. By the obedience of Christ we are, I presume, principally to understand his laying down his life for us. As it is written: “He humbled himself, and became *obedient unto death*, even the *death of the cross*. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.” Phil. ii. 8, 9. Christ was not laid under any natural or moral obligation to die on account of his own transgressions; for “He is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.” Therefore, his death was a voluntary act of obedience, to meet the purposes and will of his heavenly Father. In the extremity of his sufferings,

when bloody, lingering death appeared before him, at the sight of which his humanity was "exceeding sorrowful," he submissively exclaimed, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." Matt. xxvi. 39; Mark xiv. 36; Luke xxii. 42. And on another occasion he said, "My Father loveth me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it up again. No man taketh it from me, *but I lay it down of myself*; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." John x. 17, 18.

From these sayings of Christ, we learn that the will of God was, that he should offer up his body as a sacrifice for the sins of the world: "It pleased the Father to bruise him, and to lay upon him the iniquities of us all." Isa. liii. 6-10. And the Saviour, by this act of obedience, fulfilled the law to the uttermost, exercised the perfection of the love of God to man, and satisfied all the penal demands of divine justice, which God, in the eternal and unchanging rectitude of his moral character, demanded from him as a substitute for guilty man. The immaculate purity of the Saviour's moral nature, and the perfect obedience and unsullied holiness of his life, qualified him to offer unto God an acceptable, vicarious sacrifice. And the infinite dignity of his Divine nature gave such worth and efficacy to the transaction, that the sacrifice was infinitely meritorious. Hence, the death of Christ secures for all true believers a higher and more glorious life than that which was forfeited by the transgression of our first parents: "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; that as sin hath

reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. v. 20, 21.

"In him the tribes of Adam boast  
More blessings than their father lost."

3. The death of Christ, being infinitely meritorious in the sight of God, abolished legal and typical sacrifices for ever; therefore there needeth no more sacrifice for sin. The apostle, reasoning on this subject, says: "It is impossible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin," but "we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ **ONCE FOR ALL**. This man, after he had offered *one* sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God." Hebrews x. 4, 10, 12. A vicarious sacrifice is a victim substituted in the place of the guilty, slain for their sins, and presented unto God as an atonement for them, with a view to satisfy his justice and procure his favour. This is evident from Lev. i. 2, 3, 4: "Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If a man of you bring an offering unto the Lord, . . . if his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him, *to make atonement for him*." And, by some means or other, sacrifices have in all ages, and almost in all nations, been looked upon as indispensably necessary to render the Deity propitious.

These facts serve to make the doctrine of Christ's sacrifice easily understood, when it is preached among the different nations of the earth. Sacrifices, we have shewn, were instituted by divine appointment immediately sub-

sequent to the entrance of sin into our world, to prefigure the sacrifice of Christ. These immolations were perpetuated by the holy Patriarchs of the old world, and also by the post-deluvians, up to the giving of the law on Mount Sinai; and under the law God appointed divers kinds of sacrifices, which were to be offered by the Jews until the coming of Christ: such as, "The paschal lamb," (Exod. xii. 3); "The holocaust," or whole burnt-offering, (Lev. vii. 8); "The sin offering," or sacrifice of expiation, (Lev. iv. 3, 4); and the "Peace offering," or sacrifice of thanksgiving, (Lev. iii. 1-5); all of which were emblematical of the great sacrifice which was to be offered up, in the person of Christ, for the sin of the world. They were substituted types and shadows, but Christ was the substance. Heb. ix. 11-15. Therefore, when he appeared and offered himself up as a sacrifice, the typical services were abolished. Hence, in chap. x. of the epistle to the Hebrews, where the apostle is shewing the superiority of Christ and the gospel over Moses and the law, says: "Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God. . . . He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ *once for all*." "But this man (Jesus Christ) after he had offered one sacrifice, for ever sat down at the right hand of God; for by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." The legal sacrifices, under the Old Testament dispensation,

were only brute animals, such as bullocks, heifers, goats, lambs, &c. ; but the sacrifice of Christ was *himself*, a person of infinite dignity and worth. Ceremonial immolations could only sanctify in relation to the purifying of the flesh from ceremonial uncleanness ; they could not expiate guilt, or purge the consciences of the worshippers ; and consequently God was not pleased in them, he could not regard them as available substitutes for the life of transgressors. But Christ hath effectually and for ever put away sin offerings by the sacrifice of himself ; having made adequate atonement unto God for transgression, and thereby “ purges the conscience from dead works to serve the living God.” The Jewish sacrifices were offered up year by year continually, which shewed their insufficiency ; but Christ’s sacrifice never needed repeating, because the end for which sacrifices were originally instituted was fully answered ; and on which account God was well pleased, and declared he would remember their sins against them no more, neither will he require any more sacrifice or offering for sin : “ Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them ; for such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens ; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s ; for this he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity ; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son (a high priest), who is consecrated for ever more.”



Heb. vii. 25-28. The death of Christ therefore abolished typical sacrifices.

4. On account of the death of Christ, God hath made and confirmed the new covenant, and of course abolished the old one. According to what the inspired apostle says on this subject in Gal. iv. 24, we are to understand that there are *two covenants*, or contracts, which God hath made with mankind, in reference to their salvation. One is designated "the old covenant," and relates to that which God made with the Jewish nation at Sinai, by the mediation of Moses, in pursuance of his promise to Abraham respecting his posterity. This is referred to by St. Paul, in Hebrews ix. 18, where he shews that it was a type of the new and better covenant. Although this is called the old covenant, in contradistinction from the new, the difference consists chiefly in the external observances, which constituted a grievous yoke, which, as Peter said, "Neither our fathers nor we were able to bear;" still, it must be remembered that, as these covenants were one in their fundamental principles, faith was required as essentially necessary, being the stipulated condition on which the overtures of pardon and salvation were bestowed upon the truly penitent. The new covenant is so designated because it is God's covenant, ratified afresh by the blood of the Son of God, and which frees us from all national peculiarities and limitations which had previously encumbered it in connection with God's ancient people. The new covenant extends to all believers, whether Jews or Gentiles; for "in him shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

The first covenant was limited, and "gendereth to bon-

dage;" the second is amplified and free. The first covenant was temporal, and destined to vanish away; the second is perfect and eternal. St. Paul, speaking of the everlasting and unchanging priesthood of Christ, says, "He is a Mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place had been sought for the second." Heb. viii. 6, 7. But the second is perfect, and abideth for ever. In it there is pardon and mercy for the guilty: "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, *A new covenant*, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." Heb. viii. 12, 13. From this we learn, that a new covenant could not take place till the first was made old and ready to vanish away. In the old covenant there was a promise made in reference to the new, but it was not actually made till *Christ, by his own offering, had set aside the legal sacrifices*, "and perfected for ever them that are sanctified;" so that the promise was accomplished in Christ's sacrifice. Both of the covenants were made, confirmed, and ratified with blood. The apostle says: "Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated (brought in) without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people, according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined upon you," &c. Hebrews ix. 18; Exodus xxiv. 5-8. And Christ shews us what answers to this in the second covenant, where he says: "This is the new covenant

in my blood ;" or, " This is my blood of the new testament (covenant), which is shed for many, for the remission of sins ;" plainly intimating that the new covenant was made by his blood. Hence his blood is called " The blood of sprinkling," " The blood of the everlasting covenant," &c. It is through the blood of Christ that all the promises of the new covenant take place or become effectual. By it he redeemed his people out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation—washed them, and sanctified them to God, as a royal priesthood, an holy nation, and a peculiar people.

5. And it is only in the atonement made by Christ that the true character of God is manifested as the *just God* and Saviour of the human race. It is through the application of this blood by the Spirit that " the conscience is purged from dead works to serve the living God." Heb. ix. 14. Vigorous faith in that blood gives the strongest assurance of all the blessings which are comprehended in the glorious economy of divine mercy ; such as the remission of sins, justification, sanctification, adoption into God's family, and ultimately the possession of eternal life. This appears to have been the view taken of the subject by the apostle: " For if God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how will he not with him also freely give us all things;" as though he said, God having given us his own Son, the richest gift which he could bestow, an object of infinite dignity and supreme love, and given him up as a sacrifice, it is reasonable to suppose—now that that sacrifice is offered, on which ground the bestowment of all spiritual blessings was established—that God will freely give all things. " Christ is the end of the law

for righteousness to every one that believeth." Now, this wonderful dispensation of mercy and justice manifests in the most admirable manner the infinite perfection of God's moral character.

*Secondly.* THE BURIAL OF CHRIST. Another historical fact relative to the Saviour is, that he was *buried*. On this subject we will not say much, and some may think it might be passed by as non-essential. But even the burial of Christ's body is a very important fact, and in some respects may be regarded as essential to the establishment of the Gospel of Christ. Hence, it was not overlooked by the apostle, when he was summing up the evidences of the divine authority of Christianity. 1 Cor. xv. 4. The burial of Christ, with the circumstances associated therewith, was—

1. *A fulfilment of inspired prediction.* Isaiah, speaking of Christ, says: "He shall make his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death." And David refers to the interment of his body, when he says: "Neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." By this expression we are to understand that the body of the true Messiah should not lie so long in the grave as to be reduced to a state of putrefaction, which agrees with the fact typified by Jonah's being three days in the belly of the fish. We see then that the burial as well as the death of Christ was predicted and typified under the Old Testament dispensation; and the circumstances and particulars of his burial answer to the predictions and types.

2. The fact of his being buried, and remaining till the third day in the grave, was *an undeniable proof of the reality of his death*. If the body of Christ had been

“ quickened by the Spirit” immediately after his passion and death upon the cross, and had his body never been entombed, the enemies of Christianity might, with some plausibility, have insisted that his death was only in appearance, and not in reality; though there is strong and conclusive evidence of the reality of his death in the sayings and doings of the Roman soldiers, who were ordered to hasten the death of the malefactors by breaking their legs. When they came to Jesus they found that he *was dead already*. But, lest they should be under any mistake, and that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, one of the soldiers pierced his side, “ and forthwith there came out blood and water.” Like the paschal lamb, of which the Saviour was the true antitype, not a bone of him was broken; and it was predicted that “ they shall look on him whom they pierced.” And it is evident that, after they pierced him, they did look on him; for, as the spear was drawn out of his body, they distinctly saw blood and water separately flowing from his side.

The fact of blood and water coming out of the wounded side of the Saviour, furnishes us with very important evidence in reference to the reality of his death. The heart, which may be regarded as the fountain of life, containing the *vital blood*, is itself contained in what is called the *pericardium*, and in the *pericardium* there is a small quantity of clear water, “ so that the surface of the heart may not grow dry and inflamed by its continual motion.” We have therefore physiological evidence that the spear of the soldier went through the pericardium, and penetrated the cavity of his heart. And, although he “ was dead already,” the blood would flow from the heart, and the water from the pericar-

dium membrane which surrounded the heart. But the body being dead, the blood would be partially congealed, and consequently would flow more slowly than the water, and separately. I am aware that the notion relative to the pericardium containing a portion of water, of such a quantity as to flow out when pierced, is disputed by some who have written on the subject. Their idea is, that it is only a portion of saliva similar to that which is found in other parts of the body, and that the phenomenon of the Saviour's death may be explained as follows: The heart's blood of the Saviour broke through the muscular enclosure which confined it to the heart, and rushed into the pericardium, and that this was caused by the violent mental agony which he experienced when enduring the wrath of God for us, and for our salvation. According to this opinion, our blessed Redeemer literally died of a broken heart. Then, as to the blood and water flowing from his side when pierced by the soldier, it may be thus accounted for: When the muscular frame of the heart was broken, and the blood rushed into the pericardium, it would soon become partially congealed, and form what is technically called "*coagulum and serum*," i.e. *coagulated blood*, separated from that which is *essentially liquid*. Therefore the issuing of this "*coagulum and serum*" from the Saviour's side, when the region of the heart was pierced by the soldier's spear, was a physical demonstration, of the strongest possible character, that death had already supervened, and sufficiently accounted for the fact observed by the soldiers: they saw that he was dead already. Whichever notion is correct, the issuing forth of blood and water from the Saviour's side, when pierced by the soldier, need excite no

surprise, unless it be at the infinite love and condescension of Christ, which induced him to stoop to such ignominy and pain. The phenomenon was perfectly natural, and neither "a great miracle" nor "a great mystery." The facts of the case furnish us with a twofold proof of the reality of the Saviour's death: first, the emission of the blood into the pericardium rendering death necessary and instantaneous; and, secondly, the penetrating of the most vital part of his body with the soldier's spear, which would necessarily have destroyed life had it been there. And the fact of his being buried, and remaining three days in the bowels of the earth, closely concealed and barred in the tomb, is an additional confirmation of the absolute certainty of his death. In fact it is a conclusive demonstration, to all who read and believe the Bible, that he could not be otherwise than really dead. Had there been any latent principles or elements of human life remaining in his system, while entombed in this cold and dreary situation, it would have soon become totally extinct.

3. The manner in which he was buried, and the many precautions which were employed by his enemies to secure his body in the sepulchre, strongly prove that *his resurrection was a most glorious and mighty miracle*. On this subject I have enlarged in my remarks on the miracles of Christ being an evidence of his Divinity, and consequently further amplification would be superfluous.

4. The burial of Christ was *a striking proof of his humility*. He not only humbled himself, and became obedient to the ignominious death of the cross, but he humbled himself to submit to endure, in a certain sense, the last part of the curse pronounced against guilty Adam

and his fallen posterity. It is true that his body did not actually moulder into dust, but he "returned to the ground," and slumbered for a time in the "house appointed for all living." One writer on this subject says: "Death and the grave might be proud of such a tenant as this." But were it possible for death and the grave to have been proud in having subjugated and captivated the Prince of Life, their pride was, like the pleasures of sinners, only of short duration, and soon gave way to disappointment and mortification. "He stooped thus low," as another writer beautifully observes, "that his victory over both might be more conspicuous and complete; for hereby he became the plague of death, despoiled it of its sting and power, and was the destruction of the grave, by bursting asunder its gates, whereby he opened a passage through it to everlasting life." And these remarks are consistent with what is ascribed to our Redeemer's conquest over death in Isa. xxv. 8; Hos. xiii. 14; with 1 Cor. xv. 54: "He will swallow up death in victory;" "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction." Hence we are led to notice—

*Thirdly.* THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST. The resurrection of Christ from the dead forms a very important article of the Christian creed, and holds an essential place in the gospel system. According to St Paul, the validity and utility of apostolic preaching was hinged on this important and glorious fact: "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ; whom he raised not up,



if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." 1 Cor. xv. 14-17. This passage clearly proves that the resurrection of Christ, as well as his death, was regarded as a proof of his Messiahship, and a part of the real foundation on which the first Christians rested their faith and hopes of eternal life. One expression is very strong and conclusive: "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins;" that is, ye are yet under the guilt and condemnation of sin. Their reformation could not save them. In order to be delivered from sin, they must believe in a *risen Saviour*. The resurrection of Christ was a divine testification of the atonement, and a proof of the all-sufficiency of that atonement, in reference to our complete and eternal salvation. On this subject it may be necessary to notice particularly—

1. The resurrection of Christ *demonstrated that he was the Son of God*. Hence St. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, says: "Jesus Christ, our Lord, which was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, *by the resurrection from the dead*." Rom. i. 3, 4. More than once Christ himself referred to his resurrection, as a proof of his divine character and mission. When the Scribes and Pharisees required of him a sign, to convince them of his Messiahship; he said: "As Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly: so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." And on another occasion he said: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." "I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take

it again." And it was also predicated, that "the Holy One should not see corruption," &c. Therefore, if the body of Christ had remained in the grave, all his pretensions, in reference to his being the Son of God, would have been refuted; but his rising from the dead at the appointed time justified all his claims, and, as a learned author observes, "demonstrated that he was the true Messiah, the Son of God, the Saviour and Judge of the world."

2. The resurrection of Christ from the dead is *an evidence and an earnest of the general resurrection*. On this fact St. Paul bases his arguments in confirmation of that important doctrine: "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." 2 Cor. xv. 20-22. Christ is also called "the first-begotten of the dead;" from which declaration we infer that believers shall succeed him in the resurrection birth. This is that adoption, or sonship, which the Spirit leads them to wait for; to wit, the redemption of their bodies: "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." Rom. viii. 11. In fact, the resurrection of Christ, and that of his followers, are so closely connected, that they either stand or fall together: "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen." We are also assured by the Saviour, that there will be a general resurrection, and that he will be the efficient cause of it: "I am the resurrection and the life;" "All that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and

shall come forth ; they who have done good, unto the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." John xi. 25 ; v. 28, 29.

3. Before dismissing this article it may be proper to remark, that *the resurrection of the Saviour has been disputed, and denied, both by ancient Jews and modern infidels.* But a few moments' consideration will be sufficient to convince us that they have no reason to come to such a conclusion.

If the body of Christ was not raised by a Divine power, which declared him to be the Son of God, it was either stolen away by night, or otherwise still remains in the earth, and long ere this is reduced to putrefaction and ashes.

With regard to the latter notion, few, if any, will have the effrontery to affirm it. It is a fact generally, if not universally, admitted, by both the friends and foes of Christianity, that the grave of Christ, on the third day from his burial, was found empty ; and therefore he was either raised in a supernatural manner, or removed by men. If his body were stolen away, the question to determine is, who committed the theft ? We cannot suppose the enemies of Christ would do it, as this would contribute to his glory. Their anxiety was to confine him ; hence every precaution was taken by his enemies to secure his body in the tomb. The only supposition which remains is, that he was stolen away by his disciples, though the sepulchre was defended by a military guard.

On this subject Saurin remarks : " It is next to certain that his disciples would make no such attempt. How could they have undertaken to have removed the body ? Frail and timorous creatures ; even Peter, the most coura-

geous, trembled at the voice of a servant girl, and three times denied that he knew him. People of this character, would they have dared to resist the authority of the governor? Would they have undertaken to oppose the determination of the *Sanhedrim* (the supreme court of justice), or overcome soldiers, armed and aware of danger?"

"How could soldiers, armed and on guard, suffer themselves to be over-reached by a few timorous people? Impossible."

But we are told, by the Jews, that the body of Christ was stolen away in a clandestine manner, when the soldiers on guard were asleep. In reply to this St. Augustine says:

"Either they were asleep or awake; if they were awake, why should they suffer the body to be taken away? If asleep, how could they know that the disciples took him away? How dare they then depose it was stolen?" The statement of the soldiers was in reality "*an idle tale.*" A more ridiculous and contradictory falsehood was scarcely ever invented. We affirm, that the evidence adduced to establish the resurrection of Christ, is very strong and most conclusive, so that none but the *hyper-sceptic* can doubt its reality. Let us glance at this evidence:—

1. Those who bore testimony to the resurrection of Christ were a number of men who were eye-witnesses of the facts which they avowed. They were not deductions and suppositions from previous and distant events, but facts which they had seen with their eyes. 1 John i. 1–4. And in the apostolic evidence there is a perfect agreement: they all testify the same thing.

2. Another circumstance, which proves the validity of their testimony, arises from the character of the tribunals before which they gave evidence. Their depositions

were not made merely to the ignorant and credulous, who might easily have been imposed upon; but before learned Jews, and heathen philosophers of the highest fame—before rabbins, lawyers, courtiers, and kings. If, therefore, the resurrection of Christ had been a false tale, concocted by his particular friends, the fraud would certainly have been discovered and exposed, and the impostors would have been put to confusion and shame.

3. Another remarkable fact is, the disciples propagated the story of Christ's resurrection, not at a distance, but at the very place where the event occurred, in the synagogues at Jerusalem. Impostors generally speak of their miracles as having taken place at a distance, or as having occurred in such a manner as they are incapable of being investigated.

4. The time, as well as the place, shews the sincerity and truthfulness of the apostles' statements. They did not allow weeks and months to pass over before they declared the fact of his resurrection, but they immediately declared that he was risen, in the face of his murderers, and in the midst of the most violent opposition, knowing very well that their enemies would investigate and severely scrutinize all the particulars of the case.

5. The last consideration which we shall distinctly notice is, the motives which could have induced the apostles to assert the resurrection of Christ, if they had not been sure that such an event had actually taken place. They knew that by so doing they should not secure fame, riches, or any kind of profit. They were fully aware, on the contrary, that the publication of this fact would subject them to persecution and suffering, and might expose them to

death. Therefore, we cannot do otherwise than conclude, that they proclaimed the truth because they were convinced of its certainty and paramount importance. They believed it to be an important fact relative to the salvation of all men, and consequently ought to be made universally known.

After *Saurin* had summed up a great number of arguments, of which the above is a digest or brief analysis, he says: "Collect all the proofs together, consider them in one point of view, and see how many extravagant suppositions must be advanced, if the resurrection of our Saviour be denied. It must be supposed—

1. "That the guards, who had been particularly cautioned by their officers, sat down to sleep; and that, however, they deserved credit when they say the body of Jesus Christ was stolen.

2. "It must be supposed that men, who have been imposed on in the most odious and cruel manner in the world, hazarded their dearest enjoyments for the glory of an impostor.

3. "It must be supposed that ignorant and illiterate men, who had neither reputation, fortune, nor eloquence, possessed the art of fascinating the eyes of all the Church.

4. "It must be supposed, either that five hundred persons were all deprived of their senses at a time, or they were all deceived in the plainest matters of fact; or this multitude of false witnesses had found out the secret of never contradicting themselves or one another, and being always uniform in their testimony.

5. "It must be supposed that the most expert courts of judicature could not find out a shadow of contradiction in a palpable imposture.

6. "It must be supposed that the apostles, sensible men in other cases, chose precisely those places and those times which were most unfavourable to their views.

7. "It must be supposed that millions madly suffered imprisonment, tortures, and crucifixion, to spread an illusion.

8. "It must be supposed that *ten thousand miracles were wrought in favour of falsehood*, or all these facts must be denied; and then it must be supposed that the apostles were idiots, and the enemies of Christianity were also idiots; and that all the primitive Christians were idiots." (See Buck's Theol. Dic. on the Resurrection.)

Such are the strong and conclusive deductions of the celebrated Saurin, to which might be added many additional arguments, in favour of the resurrection of Christ, equally cogent and decisive. But more on this subject would be deemed superfluous, especially so, as we have previously, when discussing the evidences of the Saviour's Supreme Divinity, proved the resurrection of Christ to be a glorious miracle. And our particular design in dwelling so explicitly on this subject at present, is to shew that the resurrection of the Saviour from the dead is one particular transaction relative to human redemption, and may be regarded, *in many respects*, as the completion of that glorious work. Romans viii. 34. But the work of redemption was not fully completed, when viewed in the light of an atoning transaction, until Christ ascended into heaven, and officiated as High Priest of the new and better covenant. Before we discuss this subject, it may be proper to examine the doctrine relative to Christ descending into hell, during the period between his death and resurrection.

## XVII. DID CHRIST DESCEND INTO HELL?

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The idea of Christ's human soul descending into hell, is merely a human opinion. Some ancient divines believed this doctrine. Ancient opinions on this subject considered. The opinions of Rufinus and Vossius. When and how the notion originated. The phrase, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," examined. The opinions of Beza and Witsius on this passage considered. Mr. Wesley's opinion, as expressed in his "Notes on Acts ii. 27." Christ "preaching to the spirits in prison," examined. The opinions of Bishop Horsley and W. Carpenter on this passage, not scriptural. What appears to be the true meaning of Christ "preaching to the spirits in prison." The persons to whom he preached. The time when he preached to them. The medium through which he preached to the spirits in prison. The notion held by many Protestant theologians, confused and incorrect. The doctrine of Purgatory is derogatory to Christ, and incompatible with the express declarations of Scripture.

Whether or not the human soul of Christ descended into hell (the place of torment) immediately after his death on the cross, is a subject which has given rise to much discussion and dispute. The essays, sermons, and disquisitions published on this article by the learned, are numerous, and some of them very profound and critical. Pearson and Witsius, in their dissertations on the Apostles' Creed, have elaborated the various sentiments of ancient theologians, and the various creeds of the Eastern and Western Churches, to a very lengthy extent. They refer their readers



to those passages of Scripture in which the doctrine of Christ's descent into hell seems to be implied, and criticise the radical meaning of the original. But, in the midst of the roots and renderings of the Hebrew and Greek words, the various readings of the different versions, the opinions of the fathers, the multifarious opinions of councils and synods, and the conflicting sentiments of various authors, ancient and modern, the plain English reader, after having perused these criticisms, comments, and definitions, is bewildered, and totally at a loss to know what opinion to form on this important subject. All who have carefully studied the productions of the learned on this article, are aware that the doctrine of Christ's human soul having descended into hell, or to the place of the damned, after his passion on the cross, is a mere human opinion, founded on two or three passages of Scripture which seem to admit of such an idea, but which is not expressly stated. To these passages I shall call the attention of the intelligent reader, and offer a few plain remarks thereon.

1. It should be distinctly borne in mind, that there is no express declaration in the Bible that Christ "descended into hell," either in relation to his body or his soul, neither is this article to be found in the most ancient Christian creeds; that is, when rightly explained. That some of the ancient Christians believed this doctrine, we do not deny. One author, of great learning, fame, and authority as a *theological historian*, says: "It is worthy of notice, too, that anciently those creeds which had the article of Christ's descent into hell, did not contain the article relating to his *burial*; and those in which the article respecting the descent into hell was omitted, did con-

tain the article relating to the burial." It is therefore reasonable to conclude, that since originally those which exhibited the one omitted the other, both of them, owing to some mistake or improper design, afterwards began to be conjoined. We are informed, by Rufinus (who flourished at the beginning of the fifth century), that even the Papal Church deemed it sufficient to mention the burial only, without adding or subjoining, "and he descended into hell." The ancient Church of Aquileia (formerly the capital of the Venetian territory), of which Rufinus was a presbyter, had both in their creed; but he informs us that they supposed both had one and the same meaning, or that it was a repetition of the same article in other words. And Vossius, in his "*Harm. Evang.*," says: "The Churches of the East generally understood by Christ's descent into hell, what the Churches of the West denominated his burial."

At what period, what gave rise to, and by what authority these synonymous expressions began to be regarded as if they were different in meaning, cannot be exactly ascertained. Various opinions have been entertained and propagated on this subject. Erasmus says: "It was done by *Thomas Aquinas*, about the year 1365." Others seem to have been of the opinion that it was done at Constantinople so early as in the year 359, where 50 divines met to compile a creed; and in that creed, according to the account given by "*the scholastic Socrates*," (who was a native of that city, and author of an Ecclesiastical History), they asserted that they believe in Christ, "who was dead, and buried, and who penetrated the *subterranean* regions, at whom even Hades was struck with terror."

These are not the only ideas which are entertained respecting the origin of this controverted article; but we venture to say, that whenever, wherever, and by whomsoever this notion originated, it is a mere human opinion. On what scriptural authority it rests, we shall now carefully examine. There are several passages of Scripture, which those who advocate the notion of Christ's human soul having descended into hell, bring forward in support of this doctrine.

The first passage we meet with in the Bible, which seems in any way favourable to this notion, is in Psalm xvi. 10, where David personates Christ: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." This passage is explained in various ways. Some think by the word *soul* is meant the *person*; hence they infer that the *particular meaning* is the body, and the word *hell* means the grave. Hence, Witsius says: "The expression might be explained thus: 'Thou wilt not leave *my soul*, that is, *myself*.'" He argues that the original may with propriety be so rendered; and asserts that "innumerable phrases of the same sort might be quoted." He then enquires, "Why then may we not, with the venerable *Beza*, in his first edition of the New Testament, understand at least, if not translate, the Psalmist's expression thus: 'Thou wilt not leave my dead body in the grave.'" This conclusion is drawn from the fact, as stated by the author, that the Hebrew word *Nephesh*, which in our version is rendered *soul*, is sometimes used in Scripture in such a sense; and from the meaning of the word *Sheol*, which is rendered *hell*. Hence he adds, "We have now seen that a *dead body* is sometimes meant by *Nephesh*; and it is

sufficiently evident that *Sheol* sometimes means *the grave*." Now this explanation, in my opinion, though stated with great plausibility and a considerable shew of learning, is very objectionable. To say that the phrase, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," means, "Thou wilt not leave my body in the grave," has certainly the appearance of doing violence to the text, and explaining away its natural meaning. We are told that "kindred forms of expression are frequently to be found in the Bible," &c.; granted; but when we read and carefully consider the whole of the passage in question, I think the intelligent reader will see that it will not admit of the above explanation; for both body and soul are distinctly referred to:—the soul is not to be left in hell, and the body will not be suffered to see corruption. The latter phrase refers evidently to the body not being left in the grave, and consequently I cannot conceive the opinions of Witsius and Beza, on this passage, to be correct. Does it not seem more reasonable and consistent with the phraseology of this text, to suppose that by the soul is really meant the human soul of the Saviour? and that by the word hell (the rendering, in our authorised version, of *sheol* and *hades*) is meant the invisible and separate state of the dead, or the place of disembodied spirits? Taking this view of the subject, the passage in question might be regarded as a prediction of the resurrection of Christ, asserting substantially that the human soul of the Saviour should not continue in a state of separation from his body in the spirit world; and that the body itself should not continue so long in the grave as to be reduced to a state of corruption or putrefaction. This meaning will appear evident to the careful English

reader, provided he is acquainted with the various significations of the term *hell*. In many places of the sacred Scriptures its evident meaning is simply the place of disembodied spirits, without any reference to their state or condition. This is the opinion of Wesley, as expressed in his notes on Acts ii. 27. His translation is, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in *Hades*;" and he says, "The meaning is, thou wilt not leave my soul in its separate state, nor to suffer my body to be corrupted." There is therefore no proof in this text, when fairly and properly considered, that the soul of Christ went into hell, *the place of torment*, immediately after his death on the cross, where it continued, as some assert, until his resurrection from the dead. The opinion is at variance with Christ's own declaration when dying on the cross. He said to the penitent thief, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." And the declaration, so far as it related to Christ himself, assures us that heaven, or a place of joy and felicity, was the place of his immediate reception and abode. For paradise is undoubtedly the happy place where the souls of the righteous remain, from death until the resurrection, in a state of joy and felicity: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them." Rev. xiv. 13.

Another passage, from which the Roman doctors infer that Christ locally descended into hell, is 1 Peter iii. 18-20, which reads thus: "Christ also hath once suffered for sins . . . being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when

once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah." On this passage Bishop Horsley says: "The spirit by which Christ was quickened means the human soul of Christ, and might be read, *in which he went*," &c.; and that Christ did actually visit the abodes of departed spirits, and preached to them. This interpretation is advocated by W. Carpenter, in his "Biblical Companion," page 736. But this semi-Popish notion is, in my opinion, unsound, and incompatible with the evident import of several passages of Scripture; and, therefore, though it is embraced by two eminent biblical scholars, and though it is believed by thousands of learned men, it ought to be rejected as heretical and dangerous. After carefully reading the various opinions and arguments of several learned authors, Papal and Protestant, on this important subject, I am lead to believe that the spirit here refers, not to the human soul of Christ, but to the Holy Spirit (or to his divine nature, by which he was quickened and raised from the dead), by the inspiration of which he preached in righteous Noah to those who were disobedient in that degenerate age, and on account of their disobedience are now confined in the prison of hell. This I believe to be the plain and simple meaning of the above text. But, in order that this explanation may be better understood, it may be necessary to consider separately and distinctly three particulars:—

1. The persons to whom Christ preached. They are here designated "*spirits in prison*." That is, they were in prison at the time St. Peter wrote these words. But they formerly lived in bodies on earth, and were disobedient, "when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah." Hence, the persons here spoken of are the ungodly

Antideluvians; but, at the time the apostle Peter wrote these words, they were disembodied spirits, confined in the prison of hell, where they must remain in chains of darkness until the judgment of the great day. I am aware that Dr. A. Clarke, and many other commentators, take a different view of this part of the text. They consider that they were "spirits in prison" while they were in the flesh, viz. while they lived in bodies in the days of Noah; "prisoners under divine arrest, and under sentence of condemnation." But, without more light on the subject than I have at present, I cannot see any particular reason to alter my opinion; the reader may judge for himself.

2. With regard to the time when Christ preached to these Antideluvian sinners, that is of importance for us to know; and it is a subject on which every Christian and Bible student should have clear views, and be fully satisfied in his own mind. On this point the error and dangerous notions respecting the doctrine of purgatory turns. We must admit that it is not very clearly and distinctly expressed in the text which we are now discussing; but, by comparing Scripture with Scripture, I think it will not be very difficult to find out the period. The question to be decided is this: Was it during the time of their disobedience, while they lived in bodies upon earth, or during the time of their imprisonment in hell? To this question we have an answer in the passage now under consideration. It was "when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah." In other words, it was while they lived in bodies upon earth that Christ, by his Spirit, preached to them. The passage thus explained perfectly accords with the evident meaning of another text in the same epistle: "For this cause

was the gospel preached also to them *that are dead*, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." Let any intelligent reader compare these two passages together, and he will find that the same mode of interpretation applies to each. The gospel was preached to them while they were living, but they are now dead, and were dead at the time the apostle made this declaration. On this text Mr. Wesley observes, "For this end was the gospel preached ever since it was given to Adam, *to them that are now dead*, in their several generations, *that they might be judged*—that though they were judged in the flesh, according to the manner of men, with rash, unrighteous judgment, they might live according to the will and word of God." Now look at the other passage, and see if it does not admit of the same mode of explanation. The gospel was preached to them while they were living, but they are now dead, and imprisoned in hell for rejecting that preaching. And, as Burkett remarks, "There is no picking the lock of hell's gate, or breaking through the walls of fiery tophet—hell has a door to take in, but none to let out."

3. The agency through which Christ preached to the inhabitants of the old world. It was by his Spirit—the same Spirit which quickened his lifeless humanity, after he was "put to death in the flesh" and buried in the tomb. He was quickened, not by his human soul, as some writers have supposed and asserted, but by the Holy Spirit. The resurrection of Christ from the dead is nowhere, to my knowledge, attributed to humanity, but to Divinity—to the Father, to the Holy Spirit, and to Christ himself; which proves the unity of these three persons. Therefore



we are to understand that the Holy Spirit quickened the dead body of Christ, and thereby made it again a fit and proper tenement for the soul to re-enter. And this Divine Spirit inspired righteous Noah, and constituted him a preacher of righteousness to those who were disobedient in his day, "while the ark was a preparing." And, thus explained, it perfectly agrees with an assertion made by God himself in relation to the same people. Thus saith the Lord, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man, yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years." Hence Christ, *by his Spirit*, preached in the ministry of Noah 120 years, at the expiration of which period they were consigned to destruction. It appears evident, then, that in this passage the human soul of Christ is not even spoken of, or referred to, much less its descent into hell predicated. In justification of the compilers of our Church of England Catechism, and other Protestant theologians, in asserting that Christ descended into hell, it may be remarked that many of them refer to the mysterious agonies of our Lord's soul in Gethsemane's garden, and to his death on the cross; the phrase thus being regarded metaphorically, in the same figurative sense as the king of Babylon is said to "ascend into heaven," and in his ignominious fall to be "brought down to hell," &c. In Scripture we find many expressions of this sort: "Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps." These expressions, of course, must be understood figuratively, as relating to the sorrows of an afflicted spirit; for a man literally dead and buried could not make these complaints, unless we suppose them to be uttered by a separated soul agonizing in *subterraneous* dungeons. But these are com-

plaints spoken of as having being uttered by a living man in sorrow and distress. In this figurative sense Christ may be said to have descended into hell, and, as it regards his human soul, in no other sense.

Those who maintain that the human soul of the Saviour, when separated from his body by death, actually, properly, and locally descended into hell, or the place of the damned, say that he did so, either in order to display to lost souls and devils the power of his kingdom, and the victory which he had attained over sin, or that he might announce salvation to the souls of the fathers, and that he might exalt them for whom he had procured salvation to heaven ; or otherwise they hold the peculiar notions of the Eutychian Church, as held by the ancient Armenians, namely, " That Christ descended into hell to free the souls of the damned from thence, and reprieve them to the end of the world, when they shall be remanded to eternal flames."

In answer to the first of these notions, we might remark : The time of his separation from his body was not the most proper season for a triumph. His body was still bound by the chains of death, and retained in the prison-house of the grave. Between his death and his resurrection he resembled a vanquished person, rather than a conqueror. It is not customary for the hero of an army to betake himself to a prison for the purpose of giving a display of conquest and victory. Besides, we have no idea that the disembodied soul of Christ would be particularly calculated to strike consternation and terror through the regions of the damned. It is an intense sense of the *divine wrath* which strikes terror and spreads black despair " through the millions of the damned."

1. In reference to the place called, "*Limbus Patrum*," which is contiguous to purgatory, and which the surveyors of the invisible world place "in the vicinity of the lowest hell." It is evident to every one who reads and believes the Bible, that there is no such place in existence in the universe. Scripture, which is our only infallible guide on this subject, speaks of departed souls going immediately at or after death to a *fixed* state of either happiness or misery, and gives us no idea of a middle or intermediate state of purgatory. See Isaiah lvii. 2 ; Luke xvi. 22-25 : 2. Cor. v. 8 ; and Rev. xiv. 13.

2. The doctrine of purgatory is derogatory to the satisfactory atonement made by Christ. As a certain writer remarks : " If Christ died for us, and redeemed us from sin and hell, then the idea of future and further meritorious suffering detracts from the perfection of Christ's work, and places merit still in the creature ; a doctrine exactly opposite to Scripture." (See Doddridge's Lecture, 270.) According to the Word of God, a right of salvation from sin and hell was acquired by the death and resurrection of Christ, and by *virtue* of his subsequent intercession as the *one* and eternal High Priest of God. On this subject the reader may consult with profit " Limborch's Theology ;" " Earl's Sermon on Purgatory," vol. ii. 1 ; " Burnett on the Article xxii. ;" or " Henry's Cat.," vol. ii. page 250 ; and above all, " Search the Scriptures," for they testify of Christ. No work is more directly against purgatory, and the abominable doctrines associated therewith, than the New Testament. The Saviour, when about to expire in death, in solemn and expressive language, commended his spirit into the hands of his heavenly Father. When

the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple rent in the midst, "and Jesus had cried with a loud voice, and said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said this he gave up the ghost." Luke xxiii. 42, 46-56. Can we suppose that when the Saviour uttered these words he had any conception of descending into hell, or *limbo*? or can we suppose that his soul was left to sink into hell without his being conscious of what awaited him immediately on his separation from the body? Either notion is repugnant to reason, and totally inconsistent with the ideas we have of Christ's infinite knowledge. Besides, his declaration to the penitent thief puts the question beyond all doubt: "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Wherever paradise may be, or whatever peculiarities constitute its state, we venture to affirm that it is not hell, or that part of hades, or the invisible spirit-world, which "is located in the vicinity of the lowest regions," but a heavenly place of joy and felicity. Neither can we suppose the probability of the soul of Christ, after conducting the soul of the malefactor to paradise, should leave it there, and then descend into hell. The promise of the dying Saviour, made to the expiring malefactor, assures us that the heavenly paradise was the place of his immediate reception and abode, where we may conclude his soul remained until his body was reanimated by the quickening Spirit on the morning of his resurrection, when his body and soul were reunited. We therefore conclude, that Christ did not descend into hell, according to the notions held by the Papists and some other theologians, and that such opinions are erroneous, dangerous, and anti-scriptural.

## XVIII. ON THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST.

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Christ, after his resurrection, ascended into heaven. After his ascent he received and bestowed the Holy Ghost. Pentecost. Christ officiates in heaven as the High Priest. His ascent into heaven essential to his priesthood. The perpetuity of his priesthood. The manner of his intercession. Christ the only Mediator between God and man. There can be only one Priest, under the Christian dispensation, viz. Christ. The priesthood of the Papal Church, of Mormonism, &c., a piece of mockery, and, in some cases, of wickedness. The supposed origin of human priesthoods. The order of priests in the Church of England inconsistent. None but Christ can be considered a priest under the Christian dispensation.

THE work of redemption was not fully and absolutely completed until Christ actually ascended into heaven and officiated as High Priest or "Mediator of a better covenant." Heb. viii. 4-6; ix. 6-12, 23, 24.

1. That Christ, after his resurrection, did actually ascend to heaven, is a fact of which the apostles were eye-witnesses. It is true that their bodily eyes could not see him enter into the highest heavens, for "a cloud received him out of their sight." But it is a fact worthy of our notice, that, while they stood gazing towards heaven, in the way which he went, "two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you *into heaven*, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

Acts i. 10, 11. These "*two men*," whoever they might be, were sent by divine authority, to assure the disciples of Christ that he had actually ascended "*into heaven*;" and afterwards his disciples saw him in visions, in his glorified state, in heaven.

St. Stephen, just before he was stoned, said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." Acts vii. 56. And when St. John saw him in his glorified state, "His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength;" and he says: "When I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." Rev. i. 17, 18. Hence, we have satisfactory evidence, that when Christ ascended, he entered into heaven, and was *glorified*.

2. As a proof of his ascent into heaven, and that he is "glorified with the Father," he received and bestowed the Holy Ghost. This was according to the promise which he made to his disciples while he was with them on earth; and also a striking fulfilment of divine prophecy: "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." John xvi. 7. The Psalmist predicted the glorious conquest of Christ, as manifested in his resurrection and ascension, where he says: "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." Psalm lxviii. 18. This prediction was fulfilled when Christ, "by the right hand of God, was exalted."

Having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he shed it forth on his disciples on the day of Pentecost. On this day the Jews held a grand festival unto the Lord, in commemoration of the giving of the law from Mount Sinai ; which was 50 days after the *Passover*. It is worthy of remark, that as Christ was slain at the feast of the Passover, which was first kept by the Hebrews the same night on which they marched out of Egypt, so the Holy Spirit descended like fire, and indicated his powerful presence by a sound from heaven as of a mighty rushing wind, and sent forth the gospel with amazing power and success, of which these phenomena were symbols, the very same festal day as that on which God descended in fire amidst thunder and lightning, and the sound of a trumpet, upon Mount Sinai, and delivered the law. Hence, as the law came from Sinai at the first Pentecost, the gospel, more powerfully but with milder glory, came from Zion on the same festive solemnity, fifty days after the true Lamb of God was slain. This was a significant manifestation that he had ascended to the Father, and a ratification that he had entered upon his intercessory work, as the High Priest of the new and everlasting covenant. His fiery conflict is now over ; the great and glorious end for which he assumed our nature is accomplished ; the work of redemption is finished—ordered in all things and sure ; and the Holy Ghost is bestowed to qualify the immediate disciples of Christ with extraordinary power, to prove the divinity of their mission, and to establish Christianity upon the earth ; and bestowed to endow others with his ordinary gifts and graces, and put them in possession of the most indubitable evidence of the genuineness of the

Christian system. The same spirit, in a measure, is communicated to every individual Christian in our day. For, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Romans viii. 9. Hence, by this Spirit all true believers are enlightened, quickened, regenerated, sanctified, and comforted—have the knowledge of their adoption, the earnest of their inheritance, and are sealed unto the day of redemption. Eph. i. 17, 18; John iii. 5; 2 Thess. ii. 13; 1 Peter i. 2; Rom. v. 5; viii. 15, 16; Gal. iv. 6; Eph. iv. 30.

3. Christ ascended into heaven, and took his seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high, that he might officiate as High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary; and in that capacity consummate the work of atonement, by either virtually or actually pleading the infinite efficacy of his blood on behalf of sinners for whom he died. On this interesting subject many able works have been written, and thousands of sermons preached. It would therefore be superfluous, and incompatible with the design of this work, to enlarge upon it. But, as it forms an essential part of the Christian system, we cannot with any consistency, pass over it without making a few remarks illustrative of what appears to be comprehended in that which is termed "The Priesthood of Christ."

1. Christ, in order to become the High Priest of his Church, in the proper sense of the expression, must ascend into the "holy place made without hands." We are expressly told, that "if he were on earth, he should not be a priest;" that is, he could not complete the service answerable to his appointment as High Priest; and the reason is given by the apostle in the following words:



entered into the *holy place* "by the blood of goats and calves," but Christ by his own blood—

" *His* blood atoned for all our race,  
And sprinkles now the throne of grace."

Wesley seems to think that his appearance in the presence of God for us, consists in exhibiting the body which was nailed to the cross, and that will be a sufficient intercession without his vocal pleading :

" Five bleeding wounds he bears,  
Received on Calvary ;  
*They* pour effectual prayers,  
*They* strongly speak for me."

Most assuredly, his blood is infinitely efficacious, without his vocal pleading.

In contemplating Christ as an intercessor with the Father, we are not to suppose him supplicating an angry judge, and pleading to appease the wrath of a legal prosecutor ; for peace is made by the " blood of the cross." Neither are we to regard him as litigating a point of law or equity in a court of judicature. But he intercedes by shewing himself as man's surety, and as having met all the requirements of divine justice, by offering himself as a sacrifice for sin : " He who knew no sin, was made sin (or a sin offering) for us." &c. We should further bear in mind, that Christ does not intercede with the Father to remind him of anything which he otherwise might forget, nor to persuade him to anything which he is not disposed to do ; but his presentation of himself there may serve to illustrate the holiness and majesty of the Father, and the

wisdom and grace of the Son. It may be regarded as a perpetuation of the great sacrifice offered up for the sin of the world, and as a ceaseless continuation of the great day of atonement. (It may also serve other purposes, unknown to us, in relation to the inhabitants of the invisible world, and the complete economy under which they are placed.) Under the old dispensation, in connection with the Jewish ecclesiastic economy, the sacrifices were repeated; but under the gospel dispensation, the repetition of sacrifices is done away. There now needs "no more sacrifice for sin," because the great *Sacrifice* is ever before God, presented to the Father in the intercession of his Son.

It is also through the intercession of Christ that the prayers of the saints, and the sacrifice of thanksgiving to God, are offered in an acceptable manner. The Supreme Being cannot be approached through any other medium; hence the apostle says: "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually; that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks unto his name." Heb. xiii. 15. And St. Peter speaks to the same effect: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God *by Jesus Christ*." 1 Peter ii. 5.

We may also add, that Christ is our *sole* advocate or mediator: "There is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6. On this subject Mr. Wesley makes the following judicious remarks: "One (Mediator) to reconcile man to God, and to transact the whole affairs of our salvation. This excludes all other mediators, as saints and angels, whom the Papists

set up and idolatrously worship as such ; just as the heathens of old set up many mediators, to pacify their superior gods : therefore all men are to apply to this Mediator *who gave himself for all.*"

3. In the proper signification of the word *priest*, Christ only sustains the priestly office ; hence, in the Christian Church, there can be no such officer as *priest*. Papists, *partially reformed Churches*, and Mormonites, have constituted a priesthood in connection with their respective systems ; but their pretensions are groundless, and their arguments on this subject false and anti-scriptural. Their notions of a merely human priesthood may all be traced to ignorance, pride, and superstition. "A priest denotes a person commissioned by divine authority to offer up a real sacrifice to God." If this be the correct meaning of the word, we may venture to assert, that there is no such officer either within the pale of Popery, or associated with the lewd communities of Mormonism. Under the gospel dispensation, there can be *one priest only*, namely Christ, who offered the *one sacrifice* (namely his own body) upon the cross. The councils of the Romish Church, among other wicked inventions and God-insulting abominations, have constituted a priesthood ; and the deluded votaries of that anti-christian system erroneously believe, or impiously pretend to believe, that their priests (many of whom are notoriously ungodly men) are empowered to offer up to the Divine Majesty, a *real and proper sacrifice*, as were the consecrated priests of the Jewish hierarchy under the Old Testament. As to the notions entertained by the raving disciples of Mormonism, in reference to *their* priesthood, they are so contradictory and incompatible

with all rational and enlightened ideas, and so repugnant and insulting to common sense, as to be totally unworthy of confutation, or even a stricture. The man who has no more regard for his intellectual, moral, and religious character, than to be deluded with the idea of the *Mormonic priesthood*, is an object of either sheer pity or utter contempt.

In regard to the origin of a Christian priesthood amongst men, it may be worthy of notice, that ecclesiastical history informs us, that in the second century, a short time subsequent to the reign of the emperor Adrian, "when the Jews by the second destruction of Jerusalem were bereaved of all hopes of the restoration of their government to its former grandeur, the notion that the ministers of Christianity succeeded to the character and prerogatives of the Jewish priesthood, was industriously propagated by the Christian doctors; and that, in consequence, the bishops claimed a rank and character similar to that of the Jewish high priest; the presbyters, to that of the priests; and the deacons, to that of the Levites. One of the pernicious effects of this groundless comparison and pretension, seems to have been the introduction of the idea of a real sacrifice in the Christian Church, and of sacrificing priests." In the Established Church of England there is a class of the clergy denominated priests—namely, those who attain to the second order in her hierarchy. On the nature and character of their office, many different opinions are entertained, according to the peculiar notions of her clergy in reference to "the Lord's Supper." The Puseyitical party, (and some few other divines of great learning, who will not acknowledge themselves the disciples of Doctor Pusey,) seem

to regard the Lord's Supper as an *eucharistical sacrifice*. These, of course, consider all who are authorised to administer the sacrament *priests*, in the strictest sense of the word. Others hold the Lord's Supper to be a feast of commemoration of the *one sacrifice*, once offered on the cross ; " while others maintain, with the Church of Scotland, that it is a rite of no other moral import than the mere commemoration of the death of Christ." It is evident from the *Word of God*, whatever doctors, and councils, and synods may say, that Christ offered up himself as the last sacrifice for sin, and having entered into the holy place made without hands, by the shedding and sprinkling of his own blood, he has become our High Priest, and he is the *only* intercessor between God and man.

## XIX. CHRIST IS KING, AS WELL AS PRIEST.

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CHRIST'S kingdom was typified by the Jewish theocracy. His Proclamation. His Coronation, and ascent to the "Holy Hill." Christ's kingdom is by legal investiture: universal over heaven, and earth, and hell: a kingdom of power. His enemies must submit to his supreme authority. The Millenium. Will Christ reign personally? The opinions of Bishop Hall, Bishop Newton, Dr. Chalmers, and others. Hasty conclusion on this subject to be avoided.

As an evidence that Christ has completed the work of redemption, he has taken possession of his throne and kingdom, which were promised under the Old Testament, and typified by the Jewish theocracy. In heaven he reigns as Lord and King of the universal Church. In the days of his flesh this kingdom was proclaimed as being nigh at hand; but he did not actually take possession of it until he ascended far above all heavens, and sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. It was then that God "anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows," and "crowned him with glory and honour." Then was fulfilled the august prediction of the Psalmist: "I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." "Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool."

This kingdom belonged to Christ by legal investiture,

and to this purpose are the numerous Scriptures which assert that God hath loved Christ, hath appointed him over his house, and hath put all things into his hands. He is therefore the legal head of all principalities and powers, thrones and dominions. It was in consequence, and as the reward, of his voluntary humiliation and obedience unto death, that God thus highly exalted him, and vested him with supreme dominion over all things in heaven, and in earth, and under the earth, and bestowed upon him the highest glory and blessedness. Hence we find his royal enthronement and happiness are essentially connected: "Thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness; thou settest a crown of pure gold upon his head. His glory is great in thy salvation: honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him. For thou hast made him most blessed for ever: thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance." Psalm xxi. 3, 5, 6. "In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth," &c. Psalm lxxii. 7—12.

Christ must reign as King until all his enemies are put under his feet; that is to say, until they are completely subjugated or destroyed: "They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him." Psal. lxxii. 9, 11. For thus saith the Father to the Son: "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. Rule thou in the midst of

thine enemies ; the Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. He shall judge among the heathen ; he shall fill the places with the dead bodies ; he shall wound the heads over many countries." Psal cx. 1-6. The kingly power of Christ will be manifested over all by the destruction of either sin or the sinner. "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Psal. ii. 9. The hearts which now yield to the impressions of his Spirit, are broken, to be formed anew into vessels of honour, fitted for the Master's use, while those who continue stubborn and hardened, must be dashed in pieces by the blow of his eternal vengeance.

The enemies of Christ are twofold, namely, *temporal* and *spiritual*. Among his temporal enemies were the Jews, who rejected him, crucified him, and persecuted his disciples. But the vial of his wrath was poured out upon them. Their temple was demolished, their battlements were levelled with the ground, and those who escaped the edge of the sword were driven into exile, to groan under slavery till death relieved them of their sorrows ; thus, were they "dashed in pieces like a potter's vessel."

The Romans were the enemies of Christ, but the conquerors of Jerusalem were in their turn smitten by the rod of Christ's strength. Nero, Domitian, Dioclesian, and all the rest of those merciless persecutors, were weighed in the balances, and found wanting. Pagan Rome, "the throne on the seven hills," has fallen ; her idols have been crushed, and the whole Roman Empire has been seen marching in humble subjugation beneath the banner of the crucified Redeemer.



The kings and rulers of imperial Rome, and its numerous provinces, took counsel together to destroy the kingdom of Christ, and to crush the rising power and glory of Christianity. The heathens burnt with rage against the apostles, as men worthy of no other treatment than disgrace, imprisonment, and death. But what was the final result? Why, every effort tended only to enlarge the way for the victorious Redeemer. In the midst of darkness and error, bloody persecution and death, the truth of Christ shone forth with irresistible power and glory. In vain did worldly eloquence and political influence become the allies of superstition and prejudice. Sustained by the arm of the Almighty, and constrained by the love of Christ, the heralds of the cross pursued their progress from city to city, and from province to province: "The foolish things of this world," the unlearned and despised Galileans, were chosen by God to confound the wise; and mighty kings and proud philosophers were humbled in the dust before the power of divine truth, and the terrible majesty of the invisible King: "They shall make war with the Lamb, but the Lamb shall overcome them." "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. He spake unto them in his wrath, and vexed them in his sore displeasure," &c. In defiance of their malice and rage, he maintained his lofty position, and sat as King upon his holy hill of Zion. He spake in his wrath to the Jews, who rejected him, and said, "We will not have this man to reign over us." He smote them by the sword of Titus, and overthrew their once glorious city in blazing ruins. In wrath God spoke to the opposing Roman emperors; he vexed and destroyed all their contending

factions, until that very cross, which had been esteemed the symbol of degradation, was assumed by Constantine the Great as the brightest ornament of the imperial throne; and in the government of that illustrious monarch, Christ reigned over the once Pagan empire. What Christ has done to those anti-christian powers of old, he will do to his present enemies, either before or at his second coming. For he must reign universally over all power, authority, and dominion, whether in heaven, on earth, or in hell.

“ Jesus, the name high over all,  
In hell, or earth, or sky ;  
Angels and men before it fall,  
And devils fear and fly.”

“ The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” All the former trophies of the king of terrors will be absorbed in the final victory of a mightier King, at whose imperial command the trumpet shall sound, the sepulchres will be unlocked, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible. He hath the keys also of hell, or the invisible world of spirits; as well as of death, and at his authoritative bidding, both death and *heli* must give up their prisoners. And then will be brought to pass the word of the apostle: “ Death is swallowed up in victory !” And then will be fully and finally accomplished the great work of human redemption : “ As in Adam all died, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”

But, by the kingdom and reign of Christ, we sometimes understand the empire of grace, and particularly in reference to that period when Christ shall universally and graciously reign amongst mankind. On this subject it may

be proper and necessary to offer a few observations. Scarcely any subject of a prophetic character has given rise to so much controversy amongst the learned, as that which relates to what is termed "*the millenium*," or the reign of Christ on earth for "*a thousand years*." The particular point controverted by theologians is, whether or not the reign of Christ will be personal. Whichever view we adopt, the difficulties in reconciling Scripture with itself appear considerable. Several pious and eminently learned divines have espoused the affirmative of the question, and have strongly maintained that the Saviour will reign personally; but the general and prevailing opinion of the Christian Church has been, that he will reign universally and triumphantly in the powerful operations of his grace, which may be preceded by some mighty displays of his sovereign power, in the salvation of the penitent, and in the destruction of the rebellious and incorrigible.

Who then shall decide the question, and pronounce which interpretation is true? Bishop Hall has made some very sensible remarks on this subject. He says: "Where to fix the beginning of the millenium, and where the end, and what manner of reign it shall be, whether temporal or spiritual, on earth or in heaven, undergoes as many constructions as there are pens that have undertaken it." "It is indeed a mystery which shall not be completely unravelled till the day shall declare it." "At the end the vision shall speak; but till then the words are closed up and sealed." Bishop Newton also wisely remarks: "Prudence, as well as modesty, requires that we should forbear all curious inquiries into the nature and condition of this future kingdom, as how Satan shall be bound for a thousand years, and

afterwards be loosed again; how the raised saints shall unite and associate with the living, and judge and govern the world; how Christ shall manifest himself to them, and reign among them; how the New Jerusalem, the city and Church of God, shall descend from heaven to earth; how Satan shall at last deceive the nations, and what nations they shall be, &c.—these are points (says the learned Bishop) which the Holy Spirit hath not thought fit to explain; and folly may easily ask more questions than wisdom can answer.” Many of the controverted points connected with our Lord’s second coming, are embarrassed with difficulties on both sides, sufficient to prevent wise and humble men from dogmatizing on either side of the question, and to excite mutual respect and forbearance. The event is certainly a doctrine of faith, absolutely predicted and explicitly stated in the Word of God; but the time and circumstantialia being imperfectly revealed, are subjects of forbearance. These sentiments are expressed by the learned and pious Dr. Chalmers, who also says: “None but the rash and self-conceited will be dogmatically confident on a subject on which the ablest divines, both in ancient and modern times, have expressed themselves with the greatest caution.” It is lamentable to find what extravagances and absurdities some men, who have adopted the view of Christ’s personal reign, have fallen into. Many who have written on this subject have been guided by the dictates of wild, unbridled fancy, which have led them to fix the exact period of Christ’s second advent, the particular place where he will fix the seat of his government, (Jerusalem, America, &c.,) the peculiar characteristics of the polity of his kingdom, and some have even gone so

far as to say who shall sustain office under his personal government. I have observed, that in many instances they take up some figurative passage of Scripture, which they fancy sets forth the personal reign of Christ; they next form an hypothesis, and substitute it for a theory, which they, by a process of reasoning, change into an axiom, and then dogmatically assert and declare the thing is most palpable and evident beyond all doubt. Such individuals would do well carefully to study the writings of Mede, Chandler, Newton, Hall, Horsley, Bickersteth, and Burton, on this subject. The following works may be also read to advantage: Hopkins on the Millenium; Whitby's Treatise, at the end of vol. ii. of his Annotations on the New Testament; R. Gray's Discourses, dis. 10; Bellamy's Treat. on the Proph.; Shrubsole's Theol. Misc., vol. vi.; and Lardner's Cred. After carefully examining those passages of Scripture, on which the Millenarians lay the greatest stress, in support of their peculiar notions, I am inclined to think that the reign of Christ, during the millenium, will be spiritual; and the language relative to the resurrection of the saints, &c., is only figurative, and refers to the conversion of the Jews, and the diffusion of genuine Christianity through all nations, and among all people. This will be a glorious state; may we ever labour to bring about its accomplishment.

We have shewn, in the preceding essays, that Christ, by his humiliation and incarnation, by his sufferings and death, by his resurrection and ascension, by his intercession and regal authority, and by his power over death and hell, has become our great deliverer and Saviour. We shall next consider the extent of the atonement.

## XX. THE EXTENT OF THE ATONEMENT.

### PART FIRST.

THE extent of the atonement has been strongly and ably contested by theologians. No passage in the Bible expressly states that Christ died to save a part of mankind only. This doctrine is not logically implied in any text of Scripture. Remarks on Mr. Roby's "Defence of Calvinism." An examination of Eph. i. 11, and Rom. viii. 29. Mr. Leask's notion respecting the difference between atonement and redemption, examined; if correct, it does not settle the controversy. Dr. Pye Smith's remarks respecting Armenians, incorrect. Calvin's remarks on 1 Tim. ii. 1-6, implies that God would have all men be saved. The inconsistent method resorted to by restricted redemptionists to nullify the doctrine of universal redemption. Dr. Symington's new version of 1 Tim. ii. 1-6. The opinions of Mr. E. Coles and Mr. Hurrion on partial redemption. God, as an all-perfect Being, could not will the salvation of all men, if he had not provided for their salvation. The inconsistency of saying that "God has an open and declared will, and a secret will which is contrary to it." What is truth with man must be truth with God. The notion of divine duplicity is dishonourable to God, and distressing to man. We ought to believe God's declared will to be consistent with his secret will. Scripture plainly declares that Christ died for all men. Remarks by A. Barnes on Heb. ii. 9. The advocates of a limited redemption cannot use Scripture language to express their creed. The Editor of Blackie's Edition of "Barnes' Notes" explains away the evident meaning of God's Word. 1 John ii. 1, 2, considered, and other passages of similar import. To say that the *whole world* means the *elect world*, is a theological figment. The Rev. B. Morrison on this subject. The 1st Epistle of John is a "Catholic Epistle." The testimonies of Dionysius Alexandrias, Scott, and Wesley. The idea which some people hold respecting the phrase, "whole world," being used in Scripture, in a loose and indefinite sense, is unreasonable. A quotation from Matt. Henry.

Has Christ made atonement and provided salvation for all men, or did he die for a part of the human race only, and leave the other part to sink into endless and inevitable

destruction? No branch of Christian Theology has been more extensively discussed and strongly contested than this. Every argument which could possibly be brought to bear on the subject, has been employed by the learned on both sides of the question; and sometimes, in ardent debates, many assertions have been made, by both parties, which stand on the pages of polemic literature as beacons to warn us against being drawn into the whirlpool of anger and ungodly strife. In discussing this subject, we shall in the first place appeal to the word of God, and offer such remarks on the several passages bearing on the question as may seem prudent and necessary to a correct understanding of divine truth.

1. We are not aware that there is any passage in the inspired volume which expressly states that Jesus Christ died to save only a part of mankind, or that the atonement is limited to an elected number. Neither do we read that there are some who cannot be saved, because they have no interest or benefit in the atonement. But it may be said that these facts do not amount to an infallible proof that Christ died emphatically for all. We grant they do not. If any passage can be shewn which clearly implies the doctrine of a limited atonement, according to the laws of deductive evidence, we ought not to reject it simply because it is not expressly stated in such words as we think most clearly conveys or imports the meaning directly to our comprehension. Many scriptural truths are recorded in such language, and forms of speech, that the true meaning can only be ascertained by comparison, and by a careful logical process. Therefore, if it can be proved that any portion of Scripture evidently implies the doctrine of a

restricted atonement, it must be admitted as truth in favour of the limitarian theory ; but we do not know any passage which, according to the rules of sound reasoning and legitimate criticism, can be thus construed.

I am aware that several passages, both in the Old and the New Testament, are brought forward, by the advocates of limitarianism, to prove that Christ died for an elect number only, whom he knew to be his from all eternity. That which they consider their stronghold, and to which they frequently appeal as being decisive in favour of a restricted atonement, is in St. Paul's epistle to the Eph. i. 1-11. Mr. Roby, in his "Defence of Calvinism," page 21, calls this "Paul's account of the counsel of God respecting the redemption of sinners." The passage reads thus : "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ : according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love ; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace ; wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence," &c. Mr. Roby argues that "this passage shews that the several doctrines which distinguish the Calvinistic system are plainly revealed in the oracles of God." The same Scripture is frequently quoted by other advocates of Calvinism for the same purpose. But the evident meaning of this passage is, that God predestinated



to the adoption of sons, all whom he knew would believe in Christ; and that this ordination was according to his own good pleasure and gracious purpose, which, when considered in relation to believers in Christ, is unalterable. All who believe in Christ, in every nation and country, shall be saved; and those who believe not, shall be damned. We grant these conditions are not expressed, but they are nevertheless implied; because unbelievers can never be blessed with Christ in heavenly places, and be holy, without blame, and in love. This blessedness is peculiar to the saints. The believer is chosen in Christ, i.e. Christ is chosen in the divine council as the Saviour, and all believers in him. When are they thus chosen? Answer: "Before the foundation of the world:" Christ was slain before the foundation of the world, that believers should "be holy, without blame, and in love." We see then that God predestinated (conditionally) those whom he foreknew would "be conformed to the image of his Son." Rom. viii. 29. The Scriptures do not say, whosoever is elected in Christ shall believe and be holy, but "whosoever believeth shall not perish, but have everlasting life." The conditions of our salvation are not hinged on election, but on faith. Mr. W. Leask, in his able work on the Atonement, page 175, makes a distinction between *Atonement* and *Redemption*, and professes thereby to reconcile Calvinism with Armenianism; but in this he totally fails. In the same work, he also remarks, that "The idea of election, according to the foreknowledge of God, in reference to faith, is a weak point." Weak or strong, it is a scriptural doctrine; explicitly stated by the inspired Apostle: "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God." 1 Peter

i. 2. "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and BELIEF OF THE TRUTH." 2 Thess. ii. 13.

From these two passages, unitedly considered, we learn that God elected and chose his people, on account of foreseeing they would *believe the truth*; while he gave others over to "strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, *because* they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." We think therefore that this *divinely inspired* doctrine will be found as strong as Mr. Leask's speculative opinion. "All flesh is grass;" all that is merely human is feeble and fading, "but the Word of the Lord endureth for ever."

But it may be asked, can we believe unless we be elected? Answer: As faith determines our election and salvation, such a question is unreasonable, and needs no answer. A man cannot believe without grace, or the influence of the Spirit, but, through the intercession of the Saviour, such influencing and aiding grace is constantly flowing from heaven, to convince, renew, and save. We see, then, that the true gospel predestination is in relation to believers. They are elected to salvation, and are fore-appointed of God to walk in holiness, "to the praise of his glory." Dr. Pye Smith says of the doctrine of Universal Redemption: "It is inconsistent with the scriptural doctrine of salvation by *grace*. It renders the sinner the real, ultimate, and efficient author of his own salvation." How far the learned doctor is correct in coming to such a conclusion, we leave the candid and intelligent reader to judge. Such random strictures require no formal reply—

they nullify themselves. We most emphatically insist upon man's entire inability to save himself, or having anything to do with the authorship of his own salvation. "The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord." He is the author of it, the bestower of it, and the finisher of it. As "God would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth," we believe the provision is made, in the great atonement, for their salvation, and that if they be lost it is because they will not come to Christ and be saved. Hence, the Saviour said to the unbelievers in his day, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." And the apostle asserts that Christ "is the *author* of ETERNAL SALVATION UNTO ALL THEM THAT OBEY HIM." Hebrews v. 9.

2. Let us see what Scripture says respecting the extent of the atonement, and the persons for whom Christ died. It would be impossible to discuss, or even to mention, all those passages which relate to the extent of the atonement, and which, in our judgment, clearly set forth Christ as the general Saviour of mankind. It is hoped that a judicious selection will be sufficient to prove, in the most indubitable and satisfactory manner, the glorious fact, that Christ died for *all men*. St. Paul, in his epistle to Timothy, says: "I exhort, therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men: for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; *who will have all men be saved*, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and

men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave *himself a ransom for all*, to be testified in due time." 1 Timothy ii. 1-6. On this passage Calvin himself says: "Paul commands the Ephesians to embrace in their prayers *all mortals*, and not to restrict them to the Church." "He commands to pray not only for believers, but for the whole human race." Now, if it be admitted that the apostle exhorted Timothy, and the Ephesian Christians, to pray for all men, it necessarily follows that God is willing to save all men; which fact is explicitly stated, for "God wills all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth." This is the grand reason assigned by the apostle why *all men* should be prayed for. As a proof that God wills all men should be saved, "the man Christ Jesus gave himself a ransom for all," and the gospel, or glad tidings, is to be preached "to *all the world*, and to EVERY CREATURE," that "all men may come to the knowledge of the truth."

How strange it seems that any man of enlightened gospel principles, with these passages before him, and hundreds more of similar import, should doubt the universality of God's saving grace, and his willingness to save all men. The method generally resorted to by the *restricted redemptionists*, to nullify the universality of the ransom of Christ, as asserted in these and many similar passages, is an attempt to prove that the word *all* is used synecdochically, "and does not mean all men without exception, but only all men without distinction of class, rank, station, nation or tribe. Hence, Dr. Symington thus gives a new and corrupted version of the passage in question: "We are exhorted to pray for all ranks and descriptions; for it is God's will that men *of all ranks and descriptions* should be

saved; and of this we have sufficient evidence in Christ's having given himself a ransom for *all ranks and conditions of men.*" Such, says the doctor, "is plainly the connection of the various clauses in this chapter, and how far is it in this view from giving any support to the doctrine of indefinite atonement." (See his work on the Atonement, page 291.) And Elisha Coles, in his "Practical Discourses on God's Sovereignty," page 148, &c., employs the same kind of argument. The same speculative mode of reasoning is also resorted to by Mr. Hurion, in his "Sermon on the doctrine of Particular Redemption." And, in fact, theologians generally, who have adopted the limitarian view of the atonement of Christ, argue in a similar manner.

That the word *all*, in many places, should be understood in a restricted or qualified sense, no intelligent reader of the Bible will for one moment dispute; and that many biblical expressions are not to be literally understood, we also readily grant. But we think that to restrict phraseology so clear and definite as this which is used by the apostle in the above passage, is a critical violence done to the palpable and evident meaning of the inspired author, to support a mere human dogma, under the plausible assumption of superior philological knowledge. If Christ had not died to save all men, *without exception*, God could not, as an all-perfect Being, will the salvation of all men. But, that he does will the salvation of *all men*, is abundantly evident from numerous express declarations. The Almighty explicitly informs us, by the mouth of the Prophet Ezekiel, that he "has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." Ezek. xxxiii. 9. "God is not willing that any

should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” “Now God commandeth all men everywhere to repent.” Now, if God had decreed the death of the wicked, or left them to perish in their sins, unprovided for, he could **not** be displeased with their death; for this would imply imperfection, and prove that the Almighty was displeased with his own plans and modes of moral government. The Saviour said to the disobedient and rebellious Jews: “How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not.” Matt. xxiii. 27. In the above passages God hath made a public declaration of his will concerning all men, and that is, that they should be saved: This, I think, is as clear as the sunbeams. But some of those who advocate the doctrine of a limited atonement, and of Jehovah’s unconditional decrees, say: “God has an *open and declared will* which he shews unto us, and also a *secret will* which he reserves to himself, and that which shews itself only in the events of things, and all things shall come to pass according to that private and secret will.” They further argue, that his secret will may be different from his declared will. But these notions are so dishonourable to the character of God, and so incompatible with the purity of his nature, that one would think it absolutely impossible for any pious and considerate man to entertain them, even for one moment. That God should reveal one thing, and secretly intend to do a contrary thing; that he should offer the terms of mercy to all men, and make an open declaration of his goodwill and pleasure to save them, and yet have secretly decreed the unavoidable ruin and everlasting damnation of some—are, in our judgment,

doctrines which cannot be reconciled. Such notions are not only dishonourable to God, but most perplexing and distressing to man. Now, it is quite certain that God does invite all men who hear the gospel to be saved, and that he declares that he is willing to effect their salvation. But if, at the same time, he purposes that they should not be saved, and therefore knows they *cannot* be saved, these two supposed wills and purposes are but one; one to deceive and delude the world. But Jehovah is a God of truth and faithfulness; we may therefore be sure that he has not a secret will *contrary* to his revealed will. To declare one thing, and to mean another, is really falsehood and hypocrisy, and is ever regarded as so amongst men. Such conduct ought therefore to be contemplated as at an infinite distance from God; who is perfectly holy, just, and good in all his transactions and dealings: "shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" And, by doing right, we mean that he will act righteously, truthfully, and sincerely. And we believe that justice, truth, and sincerity, are the same in heaven, and in relation to God, as they are on earth, and in relation to man; or how could we be commanded to be just, after the example of God, or to be merciful as our heavenly Father is merciful, and holy as he is holy, if that were justice in God which is hypocritical and dissembling amongst men, and is not fit to be used in our common intercourse with civil and religious society. We conclude, therefore, that whatever secret will and design the Almighty may have, and which for various reasons he does not reveal, none of his purposes and designs can be contrary to his public declarations.

The notion of *divine duplicity* is a doctrine as distress-

sing to man, as it is derogatory and insulting to God. For how can man trust to the professions which God makes of his willingness to save them, if they have just reason to suppose he secretly designs or may design their ruin and reprobation? If his own and revealed will be loving and plausible, calling and inviting men to repentance, that iniquity may not be their ruin, and yet his secret will silently and irresistibly decrees their destruction, no man could have a comfortable assurance of his salvation, or a proper knowledge of his real condition; not knowing whether it was the secret will of God he should be damned or saved; consequently the happiness of man, as well as the honour of God, is concerned in this doctrine.

We are bound to believe God, when he says he would have "all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth," that he means what he says, and that he has no secret decree or will to the contrary. It is necessary we should have correct views of God, for this lies at the foundation of all true religion. Upon the truth of the infinitely wise and immutable Jehovah, we build our faith, as upon a rock which can never fail us. His word is all the security we have for a reward of our obedience, and all the happiness we expect in the future life; and it is sufficient. We are assured that he cannot deceive us. His power and goodness are our comfort and confidence; by these we are assured that he is able and willing to save us. By his righteousness and integrity, we may be assured he will save us, when we do those things which are pleasing in his sight, because he is sincere in all his declarations.

2. As it is evident that "the will of God is, that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the



truth," he must have made provision in the atonement for their salvation. This evidently appears, from the statement made by the apostle, in his epistle to the Hebrews (chap. ii. 9). Speaking of Christ, he says: "He tasted death for *every man*." I am not aware of any words, or the form of any words, which can express more clearly and explicitly the fact, that Jesus Christ made universal atonement. The phrase is simple, emphatic, and comprehensive: "Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man." On this text, Albert Barnes remarks: "That this refers to the atonement is evident, for it says, that 'he tasted death' for them. The friends of the doctrine of a general redemption do not desire any other Scripture language in which to express their belief. It expresses it exactly, without any need of modification. The advocates of the doctrine of a limited redemption cannot use Scripture language to express their belief—they cannot incorporate it with their creed—that Christ tasted death for every man. They are compelled to modify it, to limit it, to explain it, in order to prevent error and misconception. But that system cannot be true, which requires a man to shape and modify the plain language of the Bible, in order to keep men from error." These remarks so perfectly agree with my own views on the subject that I deem amplification superfluous. The editor of Blackie's edition of "Barnes' Notes" has professed to qualify and correct some of the above expressions; but in so doing, he has only mistified the subject, and partially explained away the palpable meaning of the sacred text, as he has done in many other places.

8. The same glorious truth, in reference to the universality of the atonement, is set forth in the 1st epistle of

John ii. 1, 2 : " If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous : and he is the propitiation for our sins : and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the *whole world*. St. Paul says : " Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." The propitiation is as extensive as sin. Sin hath abounded, or extended throughout all the world; and to every creature; but grace has much more abounded: it extends to every man, and the gospel of salvation is to be preached to all the world—to *every creature*.

Now, it is a remark worthy of our attention, that St. John, in the above passage, has expressed his views on this subject in such a manner, as though he were meeting the doubts and objections of the limitarians in our day. He asserts that Christ is the " propitiation for our sins," which of course must include all those to whom he wrote, and all subsequent Christians; for the epistle must be regarded as addressed to Christians generally, in all ages and in all nations. What was said in this letter to the first Christians, in reference to doctrine, is said to all succeeding Christians. After making this consolatory statement, in reference to Christians who might be overtaken in a fault, and need a re-application of the atoning blood of Christ, he adds the grand amplification, which clearly sets forth, in the most indubitable language, the doctrine of universal atonement: " And not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the *whole world*." Whom does the apostle mean by the "*whole world*?" We are told by one of the learned advocates of a restricted redemption, that the phrase means " the whole *elect* world." This mode of explanation appears very much like a wilful perversion of

divine truth, or a theological figment. A moment's reflection on the passage will be sufficient to convince every intelligent reader that this cannot be its meaning. Such a mode of explanation makes the inspired Word to utter jargon and nonsense. It is plain that the world of believers, which some theologians call "the elect world," is here contrasted, and not identified, with "the whole world." If one were identical with the other, the text, in reference to doctrine and sentiment, would read thus: Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the *elect* world, and not for the *elect* world only, but also for the *elect* world. But take the common sense view of the subject, the view which any intelligent reader, whose mind is not biased by any human creed or preconceived notions, and the doctrine appears evident. Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, without restriction—"the whole world which lieth in wickedness." On the phrase, "*elect world*," the Rev. Robert Morrison, in his work on "The Extent of the Propitiation," page 48, makes the following remarks: "It has often been said that there is an '*elect world*,' and every passage which takes in every sinner of mankind as included within the atoning work of Christ, has been compressed within the little nutshell of this fancied world. The Bible speaks of no such '*elect world*.' The Bible often speaks of the non-elect, or the yet unbelieving, as '*the world*,' but it never turns right round and calls white black, by giving the name of '*world*,' and '*whole world*,' to those '*who are not of the world, but chosen out of the world*.'" (John xv. 17.)

But the notion that the whole world means the *elect world*, is not the only erroneous notion which has been

conceived and propagated respecting this important text. Some theologians, of the Calvinistic persuasion, have supposed that this epistle was written by St. John to the Jews, and might be designated, "St. John's epistle to the Hebrews." But the supposition is groundless, as well as the opinion which gives birth to it. The epistle, by St. John, has ever been considered, both in ancient and modern times (with a few exceptions), to be a "Catholic Epistle," i.e. designed for all Churches and all believers. Dionysius Alexandrius, who flourished in the second century, calls it a "Catholic Epistle." Scott, in his preface to the first epistle of John, says: "The term general, or catholic, strictly and properly belongs to it, for it appears to me that it was intended as a circular letter, or a general address, to all the Christian Churches, which was known to come from the only surviving apostle." Most commentators concur with Mr. Scott. Wesley says: "In this epistle he speaks not to any particular Church, but to all the Christians of that age, and in them to the whole Christian Church in all succeeding ages." And this, I think, appears evident from the general tone and character of the epistle itself. The idea therefore of its being understood as addressed to the Jews only, is an unfounded conjecture, or a mere pretext, invented to support a human theory.

Some advocates of a limited propitiation, discovering the weakness or fallacy of the above notions, have contrived another method of interpretation. They say, "the whole world is to be taken in a loose and indefinite sense," as having no precise meaning at all. In confirmation of this notion, reference has been made to several passages which may be taken in this sense: "We know that we are of

God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness." Chapter v. 19. But the whole world, in this passage, evidently means the whole degenerate world. This is sufficiently clear, from the fact of its being contrasted with those "who are of God"—"who are not of the world, but taken out of the world."—"And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus that *all the world* should be taxed." Luke ii. 1. The meaning of this passage is not "loose and indefinite," but sufficiently clear and intelligible: "All the world," means all who were under the government of Cæsar Augustus. And the passage in Rom. i. 8, is to be understood in the same sense. But no one could ever suppose that St. John referred particularly to the Roman Empire, when he asserted that Christ was the propitiation for the whole world. Hence, it is very evident that these passages have a different meaning from the expression now under consideration. The true meaning of any passage is generally understood when we pay particular attention to the statement connected therewith. The apostle, in the first place, asserts that Christ "is the propitiation for our sins," viz. the sins of those who have believed in him, as we have before shewn; and then, in order to shew the amplification and universality of the propitiation, he adds the significant and comprehensive phrase, "And not for ours only, but for the sins of the *whole world*. Nothing can be more definite and conclusive. The great and good Matthew Henry says: "The price of redemption paid by Christ was sufficient to redeem as many worlds as there are sinners in the world."

There are many, very many, portions of Scripture, both in the Old and New Testaments, in which the doctrine of

universal redemption is set forth, or implied; but we deem the above sufficient to satisfy any reasonable mind on the subject. We shall, in our next, answer a number of popular objections brought against the doctrine of universal redemption.

## XXI. EXTENT OF THE ATONEMENT.

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### OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

There are some texts of Scripture which seem to speak of Christ as having died for the elect only ; but such passages, when properly considered, are not at variance with the doctrine of Universal Redemption. A quotation from Mr. Carpenter. The fact that all are not saved is no proof that Christ did not die for all. The death of Christ necessary if only one be saved. The sacrifice offered by Christ sufficient to atone for all. God, in the gift of his Son, had other objects in view than redeeming man. A quotation from Finney. All beings in heaven are benefitted by redemption. Redemption no failure, whoever be saved, or whoever be lost. Man's salvation conditional. God uses means for the salvation of sinners. Some of God's ways incomprehensible. The reason why God does many things which we cannot comprehend. "Did Christ die for those who were in hell before his death?"—answered. The idea of God reprobating to damnation a portion of the human family, not Scriptural. Dr. Payne and Finney on this subject. A stricture on Mr. Parke's peculiar notion. The notion that God has so circumstanced some that they cannot obtain salvation—answered. Young children ; idiots ; Heathens. The reasons why we should send heathens the gospel, even if they can be saved without it. Impenitents. The doctrine of universal redemption not novel. The Bible must be the standard. Quotations from Bishop Davenant, Clemens Alexandrinus, Origen, Augustine, Primacius, Athanasius, Miller, &c., to prove that the doctrine of universal redemption was held in the primitive ages of Christianity. Cyril, Chrysostom, and Ambrose—Flodoardus, and Gotteschalchus the monk—Luther and Calvin, believed in universal redemption ; so did Bullinger, Benedict, Arctius, Wolfgang, Latimer, and Bishop Jewel. It is the doctrine of the Church of England. References to several learned commentators. A quotation from E. Polhill. Many eminent theologians in the present day advocate this doctrine. Preached successfully by the various Methodist bodies. The reason why some Calvinistic divines embrace the limitarian doctrine. A limited atonement inconsistent with the most glorious doctrines of the New Testament. The Calvinistic notion of the divine decrees is inconsistent with reason and Scripture, and irreconcilable with the justice of God. A quotation from the "Evangelical Rep." page 14.

To the doctrine of universal redemption many objections have been made ; to a few of them we shall briefly and respectfully reply. It would be superfluous and unedifying to offer strictures on every frivolous objection raised against this doctrine, but such as appear to be of any weight or importance, or which, on account of their singularity, have gained notoriety, we shall distinctly notice.

1. There are some passages in the Bible which speak of the Saviour's death, as though it effected the salvation of the elect only ; such as, " I lay down my life for the sheep ;" " God purchased *the church* with his own blood ;" and others of similar import.

Ans. In these passages there is certainly something *special* implied ; but still, in relation to redemption, the language is not exclusive. We have no conclusive evidence, in expressions like these, that the atonement applies to the elect exclusively ; such passages therefore ought not to induce us to set aside, or to put a forced construction upon, these delightful parts of divine truth which express most decisively that Christ died for the "*whole world*," and for *every man*. In comparing these two classes of passages together, we find no contradiction, nor even anything paradoxical. Christ " laid down his life for his sheep." " He is the propitiation for our sins," (or for the sins of the sheep,) " and not for ours" (or theirs) " only, but also for the sins of the whole world." What contradiction do we discover in comparing the above passages ? None at all. Christ purchased the Church " with his own blood," and " he tasted death for *every man*." He not only purchased the Church, or those who believe in him, but he bought those who deny him, and who thereby bring upon themselves



swift destruction. 2 Peter ii. 1. On this subject the Rev. H. Carpenter makes the following judicious remarks: "If some portions of Scripture tell us that our Lord laid down his life for the sheep, and that his sheep are special objects of his love, and they shall never perish, why should we not receive these declarations in their plain and obvious meaning, and be thankful that the Lord has special purposes of mercy towards his people? And if, again, other portions of Scripture, greatly out-numbering those just referred to, testify that our Lord's death is an atonement for all sin—a remedy open to the whole world, available and applicable to every child of man—why should we not receive these declarations too, in their plain and obvious meaning, and be thankful that the Lord loved the world, and willingly offered himself for the sins of all?"

2. Another objection to the doctrine of universal atonement is based on the fact, that all are not saved. The objection is put thus: If Christ shed his blood for all, and all are not saved, then Christ died in vain. This remark frequently occurs, both in the writings of the learned and in common conversation among the unlearned. But the objection is invalid, and may be easily answered. In the first place, we might remark that it is evidently erroneous. Those who make this objection seem to suppose that the sufferings of Christ were regulated in proportion to the number of individuals for whom he died; and that consequently the greater the number for whom he died, and who are benefitted thereby, the greater must be the aggregate amount of his sufferings. This view brings the death of Christ before us as a mere commercial transaction, and robs it of all its moral grandeur. We need

not, therefore, wonder that it is nowhere expressed in Scripture; and it is only by a tortuous method of reasoning that certain isolated texts can be made apparently to countenance it. The value of the death of Christ, as a means of reconciliation between God and man, lies in the motive power which it presents; and such is the character of sin on the one hand, and the moral power of the atonement on the other, that the death of Christ was indispensably necessary to secure the salvation of any; and should the posterity of Adam be multiplied by millions more than ever will be born, it would be a full and sufficient sacrifice—a perfect atonement for them all. The death of the Lord Jesus, like the light and warmth of the sun in the heavens, is indispensable even for one individual; and like the same luminary, it is amply sufficient for all men, even though they were multiplied as the stars of the heavens in multitude, or as the sand which is upon the sea shore. Besides, we must also bear in mind that God, in giving his Son to die for the whole world, had other purposes in view than the salvation of human souls, namely the development of his own glory, and a stupendous manifestation of his moral character. In fact some able divines have concluded that this was God's chief end in the gift of his Son and the redemption of the world by him; as it is infinitely fit, and right, and necessary, that he himself, and not man, should have the pre-eminence in all things. On this subject Professor Finney very properly remarks, in his *Theol. Lec.*, page 262: "God does all things for himself; that is, he consults his own glory and happiness, as the supreme and most influential reason for all his conduct. This is wise and right in him, because his own glory and happiness are

infinitely the greatest good in the universe. He does what he does, because he loves to do it. He made the atonement to gratify himself; that is, because he loved to do it." And in this we see the greatest good resulting to the human race. The development of Jehovah's glory, and the benefit of the world, greatly consisted in the infinite and universal love of God, as displayed in human redemption. The atonement, therefore, was made for the benefit of the universe; or, in other words, "All holy beings are and must be benefitted by it, from its very nature, as it gives them a higher knowledge of God than they ever had before, or ever they could have gained in any other way. The atonement is the greatest work he could have wrought for them; the most blessed, and excellent, and benevolent thing he could have done for them. For this reason Angels are described as desiring to look into the atonement. The inhabitants of heaven are represented as being deeply interested in the work of atonement, and those displays of the character of God that are made in it." If these views are correct, which I think we have no reason to question, what folly it must be to talk of Christ dying in vain, because all are not saved. Whether men embrace salvation through the atonement, or impiously reject it, whether they be saved or lost, God will most assuredly be eternally glorified, in consideration of his wisdom, power, and benevolence, as manifested in the redemption of the *whole world*, by Christ the Saviour of the human race, who "tasted death for every man," and for providing means for his gospel to be preached to all the world, and to *every creature*. But it may be said, if God has used means to bring about the salvation of the *whole world*, and those

means have proved ineffectual in accomplishing salvation in every individual case, then the scheme has proved a partial failure at least. In answer to this we might remark—

(1.) This kind of reasoning arises from not making a distinction between redemption as a price paid for all, and redemption as a fruit of that price received by those who believe. When our Lord offered himself as a sacrifice for sin, and died on the cross, the Father accepted the ransom; then, so far as the ransom payment was concerned, Christ redeemed the whole world: “He tasted death for every man.” But the application of that precious blood was not thereby made to any individual; and before any man can be made a partaker of the fruits and benefits of redemption, he must believe in Christ as the “Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.” But the moment he complies with this divine stipulation, he is “actually and personally redeemed;” or, in other words, he is saved through faith in the atonement made by Christ. Redemption, considered as a ransom paid, should not be identified with redemption as an actual deliverance experienced by believers. This truth might be illustrated by analogy. A man is suffering under some painful disease; a certain medicine is procured, efficacious to restore him to health; but, in order to actually experience its healing power, the patient must take that medicine. The same may be said of almost all the provisions which God has made for the wants of men; and, as the application of the medicine, in the case of the sick man, is indispensable; so faith in Christ, by which redemption is applied to the soul, is indispensable in the other case.

(2.) Inspired history furnishes ample proof that God has used means for the salvation of sinners which have been ineffectual. Why he has done so we cannot say; only we may say, "So it seemeth good in his sight;" and he is too wise to err. Is he not daily using means with sinners, in his providence, and by the commandments of his Word? Are these means effectual? In many instances they are not. God not only commands, as the supreme Ruler and Governor of the universe, but he kindly invites, exhorts, warns, woos, and affectionately entreats the sinner to turn from his wicked ways, that he may obtain pardon and salvation. Hence Christ said to the revolting and incorrigible Jews: "How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings? and ye would not." But this does not prove that all the manifestations of Christ's willingness to save them were vain. Some great and glorious end might be answered thereby, unknown to poor, short-sighted man. It is a display of human folly to conclude that anything fails, simply because it does not *directly* answer every one of the important purposes which we expected. In the operations and eternal results of God's moral government of the universe, there may be a thousand reasons, unknown to us, why God has taken the course he has in reference to the redemption of the world and the personal salvation of men. "The judgments of the Lord are a great deep," which no human or angelic mind can fathom; "and his ways are past finding out." But we ought not to reject the part which God has so plainly made known, simply because we cannot comprehend his unrevealed purposes and designs. We should rather love and adore him for what he has been

graciously pleased to make manifest, but for a clearer manifestation of the nature of his moral government we must patiently wait for a more convenient season, until we see as we are seen, and know as we also are known.

(3.) In the world of nature, and in God's government of the material universe, as well as in the kingdom of grace, many things which God does, or which he allows to take place, appear to be in vain. As a certain writer observes, "In this apparent *waste*, the world of matter corresponds with the world of mind." We might inquire, Why does God bring into existence innumerable millions of insects and animals to infest the earth and to be eaten up by each other? Why does he cause so many beautiful flowers to spring forth and bloom, in regions where there is no eye to admire their beauty, or no intelligent being to appreciate their worth? Or why does he cause the refreshing showers to fall on the bosom of the wide ocean and uninhabited desert? Thousands of questions might be raised on this subject, which no man, however well skilled in natural philosophy, could satisfactorily answer. But we are not to conclude, on this account, that the almighty and all-wise God does anything or makes anything *in vain*. Neither are we to suppose, that if Christ died for all, though many be not saved (for whom Christ died), he must therefore have died *in vain*. Such a mode of reasoning is both bad logic and bad theology. The great and glorious end which the infinitely wise and infallible Governor of the universe had in view, in planning and executing the sublime scheme of human redemption, will be answered, whoever be saved or whoever be lost. The grand design of heaven, in the Saviour's assuming our nature and dying for the sins of

the world, was to make provision for the salvation of every child of man, and in this benevolent plan to give the world, yea all worlds, the most brilliant display of the glory of his moral nature and natural perfections, and these ends are fully answered; therefore Christ has not suffered either wholly or partially in vain, though many may be lost. The hinge on which the changeless destinies of immortal souls now turn is this: "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned."

3. Another question, raised by the advocates of a limited atonement, is: "Does it not seem inconsistent and unreasonable to suppose that Christ died for those who were in hell long before his death?" This dark and foolish question was once submitted to me, on a public platform, by a minister belonging to the Scotch Presbyterian Church, who also insisted upon the impossibility of Christ's having died for "the rich man" who died and lifted up his eyes in hell, &c. It is scarcely necessary to say, that his questions and mode of reasoning brought on himself the contempt of the congregation. Morrison, in order to shew the palpable absurdity of such ridiculous enquiries, proposes another question of a similar kind: "Did Christ die for those who were in heaven long before his death?" Let the limitarians answer this question, which may serve, in some measure at least, to settle the other. The objection is unreasonable, and argues that those who propose such questions are either insincere, or men of very limited theological attainments, and have but very imperfectly studied the dealings of God with man, in reference to Christ and the great work of atonement. For it is evident, to every man who carefully studies his Bible, that the peculiar mode of God's moral

government, in relation to the human race, which are unfolded in the Word of God, shew that God dealt with mankind *before the actual death* of Christ, as though the Lamb had been really "slain from the foundation of the world." This truth is so generally admitted, and so universally acknowledged among the various sections of the Christian Church, that to argue the question would be superfluous and a criminal misapplication of our time.

4. Some have objected to the catholicity of redemption, on the ground of the supposition that God had determined from all eternity that a certain number, whom he had individually reprobated, should be eternally damned. This awful doctrine is set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith, compiled by an assembly or synod of learned divines, under the moderatorship of Dr. Twisse, in the reign of Charles I. "Whatever comes to pass in time, is the execution of eternal decree," &c. (See the Westminster Catechism on Decrees, &c.) In answer to the objection in question, we might remark—

(1.) It is nowhere stated in the Bible that God created man, or any number of men, that they might be damned.

(2.) We are not aware that the doctrine is taught in any other form of words.

(3.) From the nature and character of God, as set forth in the inspired volume, we have no reason to conclude that this is the case. "GOD IS LOVE."

(4.) The idea of God making man for the sole purpose of damning him, would lead us to suppose that God is a malignant Being.

(5.) We cannot suppose that a Being who is infinitely



perfect, holy, just, and good, could have any reason, or cause, to resort to such apparently malignant measures, in order to magnify his own glory or manifest his almighty power.

(6.) If any sinners are damned, and we fear many are, God is not to blame; the fault is entirely their own, which could not be the case if they were eternally decreed to damnation.

(7.) If, in maintaining our views on this subject, we set aside the opinion of many learned men, on the other hand we agree with the opinion of a great number of men equally learned and pious. Dr. Payne, in his "Lecture on the Divine Sovereignty," page 42, referring to the doctrine of unconditional reprobation, says: "I know no term, either in any living or dead language, sufficiently strong to express my abhorrence of this doctrine." Another learned man says: "It is anything but the doctrine of Bible theology: it is antitheology; and if sincerely believed in for one moment, it would, in the estimation of the persons who believed in it, degrade God's character beneath that of the most inhuman tyrant that ever breathed." Similar sentiments are expressed by a vast number of learned men who have written on this subject. Therefore, all things considered, we conclude, that though the venerable assembly of learned divines, under the moderatorship of an eminent professor of theology, have pronounced in favour of reprobation, and though it is supported by many theologians in our day; yet, as it is repugnant to reason, and contrary to Scripture, we hesitate not to reject it. We believe it to be a most dangerous error,

calculated to misrepresent the character of God, and to make a false impression on the mind of man in reference to the mode of God's moral government.

5. Another objection to universal redemption is, that it secures no glory and praise to God; but the more limited, the more praiseworthy and glorious it is. This somewhat singular and ridiculous notion is expressed by the Rev. W. Parke, a minister of the Church of England. He says, in his Sermon on Election, page 47: "Suppose you are all in want and destitution, and I relieve only *some*, will not those *some* laud and magnify me more than if I relieved all? If all had been relieved, there would have been no difference; or, if all had a right to be relieved, there would have been no praise, no love, no wonder, no astonishment; but when only some are the objects of my charity, the admiration of the some is constrained, and their praise is real and hearty. You may depend upon it, albeit many pretend to think differently, that the boon which may be had by everybody will be little thought of—the salvation which is for *all* will be appreciated by none." And Mr. P. has the effrontery to stigmatize with vanity, dishonesty, impudence and ignorance, those who oppose this doctrine. From such wretched theology, from such miserable reasoning, and from such impious bigotry, may the "good Lord deliver us." To shew the fallacy and inconsistency of such a mode of reasoning as is adopted in the above paragraph, by logical argument, would, we presume, scarcely be considered serious, or compatible with the dictates of good sense. In the course of our polemic reading, we have met with many singular attempts to support the doctrine of a limited atonement, but the above method,

adopted by Mr. P., is the most unscriptural which has ever come under our notice. Mr. P.'s argument, if viewed theologically, seems more like an impious burlesque on the moral character of God and Christianity, than a sincere opinion uttered by a professed minister of the gospel. It is also an insult offered to the common sense of every enlightened Christian, and a coarse outrage on the feelings of our common humanity. We believe that human nature is very bad, and in some cases it may be so depraved as to delight in the miseries of others, and begrudge the favours bestowed upon them by a benevolent friend; but in general this is not the case, in fact it is never the case in reference to those who are under the influence of saving grace. True religion is a system of pure, disinterested, and expansive benevolence. To say therefore that Christians rejoice more heartily in restricted charity, and limited benevolence, than in that which is free and universal, is contrary to the very nature and character of our holy religion. It is the very characteristic of selfishness, which is just the opposite of Christianity. True Christians love even their enemies, and are anxious for the salvation of all men. Like their heavenly Father, they would have all men saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. Mr. P. argues, that "the salvation which is for all will be appreciated by none." This is a strange expression to be uttered by a man who is instructed to "preach the gospel to *every creature*." It is not only the effusion of spiritual darkness, but the offspring of bigotry and impiety, and is so thoroughly anti-scriptural and unchristian as to need no formal reply. A more miserable effort to support a most miserable doctrine we have never read. If all Mr. Parke's arguments, on his "Five

Particular Points," are as weak and as repugnant to common sense as the one we have just noticed, *true Christianity* and *Bible truth* have nothing to fear from the attacks of such an enemy.

6. Another objection to the doctrine of universal redemption is : " God has so circumstanced some men, that they are absolutely unable to believe in Christ. In some cases, men are left to die and perish in their fallen state ; and in others they are (as in the heathen world) beyond all gospel means of salvation," &c. From these *supposed* facts it is inferred that Christ has not died for them. This certainly is an objection which is entitled to a respectful reply. The various characters comprehended in this objection may be distinguished by the following classification, which we will consider in order :—

(1.) Some who are unable to believe in Christ for salvation are infants. But Christ having died for "the sin of the world"—that is, to atone for original transgression—and little children not having committed any sins, or contracted any personal guilt, they, through the superabounding merits of the Saviour, are admitted into the kingdom of heaven : " Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not : for of such is the kingdom of God." Mark x. 14.

(2.) Other individuals, to whom God has denied or withheld the power of believing in Christ for salvation, are idiots—persons so constituted, in reference to their physical and intellectual nature, that they cannot understand the doctrine of the atonement. Such individuals, on account of their intellectual imbecility, may, we think, very safely and properly be classed with infants.

Therefore, though they cannot intellectually believe in Christ, they are nevertheless benefitted by his death. God does not require impossibilities.

(3.) There are vast multitudes living in heathen darkness, millions who have never heard the Saviour's name, and consequently cannot possibly believe in Christ; and yet it is written, "Salvation cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. But how shall they hear without a preacher," &c. And as no preacher has been actually sent to those dark places of the earth, it may well be asked, "Is it not reasonable to suppose that Christ did not die to save them?" To this important question we answer, No. We are rather disposed to conclude that the heathen, who lives and dies in total darkness, who acts morally right according to the glimmering of knowledge which he possesses, will be saved, like the infant and the idiot, through the common sacrifice of Christ. To this notion the objector may reply: Why then not leave the heathen to their equitable judge, who, having given but one talent, will not require from them the improvement of ten? Why increase their responsibility by sending them the gospel? These enquiries may, we think, be satisfactorily answered, when we consider the requirements of the gospel, and the superiority of the Christian system. Supposing we grant the possibility of the heathens' being saved without the light and instruction of the gospel, this does not prove that the gospel, to them, is superfluous, or that they would be better, or even as well, without it, or that we are justifiable in disobeying the instructions of Christ, who says, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Many in England may be saved who cannot read the Bible;

but this is no proof, *surely*, that they ought not to be instructed to read, or that reading the Bible is unnecessary; or, if simply reading the Bible be sufficient, they should not make any advancement in knowledge, for fear of increasing their responsibility. A man who is blind may travel from village to village by the humble aids of his dog and staff, but this does not prove that eyesight is unnecessary. A traveller may grope his way through the gloom of midnight, or prosecute his journey to any given place, with considerable safety and facility, by the light of the moon or even the twinkling stars; but does he not welcome the rays of the rising sun, and the cheering light of opening day? We have no need to multiply comparisons, in order to illustrate the subject. Christianity as far exceeds heathenism, as the light and glory of day are superior to the darkness and gloom of night. We affirm, that the religion of Christ gives a perfection and dignity to man, in relation to his moral and intellectual nature, which nothing else can do; and that the spiritual knowledge and piety of the most distinguished philosophers of either ancient or modern times (considered apart from the knowledge of Jesus), is no more to be compared with the attainment of the meanest child of God, than the light of a taper with the light of the meridian sun. What are all the acquirements and accomplishments of human nature? or what will they avail at last, if those who possess them are found unqualified to participate in the joy and glories of the better life? "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul."

(4.) But there is another class of individuals, whose conduct has led some to conclude that God leaves them to

perish in their sins, or gives them no power to believe to their soul's salvation ; namely, such as live in Christian countries, and have opportunities of attending the means of grace, &c., but never seem to benefit thereby ; who, in the midst of gospel light, remain dark and uninformed, stupid, careless, and openly wicked. No arguments, however powerful and conclusive ; no appeals, however striking and pungent ; no exhortations, however persuasive and alluring ; no occurrence, however terrific and alarming, seem to affect them. They appear to be hardened in sin, and proof against all efforts to save them, as though they were destined to perish. Hence, some have concluded that such characters *are reprobated*, or that they have no effectual strivings of the Holy Spirit, and that therefore Christ did not die to save them. But this objection to the doctrine of universal atonement is based upon mere supposition, which, in its application to individual cases, is erroneous in ninety-nine cases out of every hundred. Many who apparently pass through life unmoved and unconcerned, in reference to their souls' salvation, are not without their convictions and good desires ; and in many instances they determine to amend their lives. The reason why they are not saved is, because they stifle conviction, harden their hearts, close their eyes against light, yield to temptation, and follow the lusts of the flesh and the pride of life ; and if they die in their sins, their damnation is the result of their own wicked conduct. The unquenchable flames in which they will for ever burn are of their own kindling, the deathless worm which will eternally prey upon their guilty consciences is of their own creating, and their wretched companions, "the devil and his angels," together with all

the damned, will be of their own choosing. The torments of hell will be the reaping of that harvest the seed of which was sown in the flesh ; and the punishment which they will everlastingly endure will be the just reward of those sins which they committed in this probationary life, and especially the sin of rejecting Christ their Saviour. To offer any palliation, therefore, on behalf of the careless and rebellious sinner, who rejects the Saviour, and hardens himself in crime, on the supposition that Christ has not died to save him, is incompatible with both reason and revelation. On the other hand, to suppose that God will punish, with equal severity, a portion of the human race who live and die in sin, for whom no atonement was made, and to whom salvation was never *in reality offered*, is, in our opinion, repugnant to the moral character of God, and altogether inconsistent with the nature and administration of his moral government. Our remarks on this subject might be multiplied to a great extent, but we pass on to answer another, and the last objection which we shall distinctly notice.

7. Some have objected to the doctrine of universal redemption, because, in their opinion, it has not been embraced by learned divines until recently, and therefore they conclude it cannot be the doctrine of the Bible. With them it is regarded as, and asserted to be, “ a novel upstart opinion but of yesterday, and utterly unsupported by the votes of the truly great and good.” It has been asked by those who hold the limitarian dogma, “ What ! can most ministers, and presbyteries, and synods, and almost all good men, be wrong ? ” This question Mr. Morrison boldly and wisely answers in the following plain



and conclusive language : “ Though it were the case that the whole world opposed the doctrine, if I saw it clearly revealed in the Bible, I would believe it, venture my soul upon it, and stand or fall by it.” This is right. The Bible is the only infallible standard of faith and practice. The creeds of synods and presbyteries, the confessions of faith and “ *shorter catechisms*,” are, when considered apart from the Word of God, only the shifting sands of human opinion, partially true and partially false ; and consequently cannot be relied on with safety. It is a well known fact that learned men, and grave assemblies of ecclesiastics, have, in their deliberations and consultations, come to many erroneous conclusions, and decreed enormous cruelties. I need only mention the councils of Constantinople and Trent, and the famous Synod of Dort. But, should it be contended that the suffrages of truly learned Christians is a proof of the correctness of the doctrine they patronised ; and that a doctrine which is unsupported and undefended by learned and good men, *or which is novel*, cannot be right ; then, if we admit this opinion to be correct, our conclusions will be in favour of universal redemption, or that Christ died to save all men. For we have the satisfaction to know that the greatest and best Christians, in ancient as well as in modern times, have given their hearty sanction to the doctrine of universal atonement by Jesus Christ ; and especially those whose labours in the Lord have been crowned with marked success. It is necessary to lay stress on this fact, because the *enemies of God’s universal love* have so repeatedly asserted that the doctrine of general redemption is of modern invention, and its advocates are chiefly unlearned, &c.

(1.) It is questionable whether the doctrine of a limited propitiation was ever embraced by any Christians, either learned or illiterate, during the first four centuries of the Christian era. This is a consideration which ought to lead our opponents to pause before they pronounce the doctrine of universal redemption "*a novel system*" or "*modern invention*." The learned Bishop Davenant, a divine most intimately versed in ecclesiastical history and the writings of the Fathers, in his "*Dessertatio de morte Christi*," chap. i. says : "It may be truly affirmed, that before the dispute between Augustine and Pelagius, there was no question concerning the death of Christ, whether it was to be extended to all mankind, or be confined only to the elect. For the Fathers, when speaking of the death of Christ, describe it to us as undertaken and endured for the redemption of the human race ; and not a word (that I know of) occurs among them of the exclusion of any person by the decree of God. They agree that it is actually beneficial to those only who believe, yet they everywhere confess that Christ died in behalf of all mankind."

In confirmation of the above statement, we shall select a few quotations from some of the first Christian authors, whose writings are frequently appealed to in matters of theological dispute.

Clement of Alexandria, a man of profound erudition, who wrote about two hundred years after Christ, says : "Christ freely brings and bestows salvation to the whole human race." (Pedagog, cap. xi.) Origen expresses the same opinion : "Jesus is declared to have come into the world for the sake of all who were sinners, that they might leave their sins, and give themselves up to God." (Celsum,

lib. v.) Primacius, in his comment on 1 Timothy ii. 6—“who gave himself a ransom for all”—says: “For all men, indeed, the blood of Christ has been shed, but it is beneficial only for them that believe.” Primacius, we are informed, “was a disciple of St. Augustine;” and therefore we may safely conclude that this opinion was embraced by Augustine himself. And it is said that “Augustine, in his practical discourses, *always* represented the sacrifice of Christ as universal.” (Milner’s History, page 356.) And Prosper, an admirer and follower of Augustine, maintains that he held “that Christ gave himself a ransom for all.” When the Gallican divines, in the fifth century, asserted “that the Saviour was not crucified for the whole world,” the semi-Pelagians “objected to this doctrine as *new, invidious, and erroneous.*” From this it is evident that Augustine, in his controversy with the semi-Pelagians, never attempted to confute the doctrine which they held, “that Christ died for the whole human race;” for, had he done so, the doctrine would not have been regarded as *new*, when subsequently asserted by the Gallican divines. These important facts clearly prove that the doctrine of universal atonement was held by many distinguished theologians in the four first centuries of the Christian era. And we may add, that the pious and learned J. Milner, in his “Church History, (vol. ii. page 466, Edit. 1827,) makes the following statement respecting “the Augustine Controversy:”—

“Another subject, of which the reader, versed in theological controversy, would wish to be informed, is, whether Augustine held ‘particular redemption.’ Very few words shall suffice for this. Whether Christ died for the elect,

or for all men, was never the object of his controversies, and certainly in his practical discourses he always represents the sacrifice of Christ as universal; so every preacher should do, if he means to profit his hearers. The notion of particular redemption WAS UNKNOWN TO THE ANCIENTS, and I wish it had remained equally unknown to the moderns."

The illustrious Athanasius, who flourished before the days of Augustine, and who filled the archiepiscopal chair 47 years, was a firm believer in universal redemption. Hence, in connection with his able defence of the true divinity of our Lord, he taught the unlimited extent of the atonement. He says: "Christ the Son of God, having assumed a body like ours, because we were all exposed to death, gave himself up to die for all, as a sacrifice to his Father." Gregory the great, who lived and died in the fourth century, says: "The sacrifice of Christ is an imperishable expiation for the whole world." And it is well known to every person versed in ecclesiastical history, that similar passages might be selected from the writings of Cyril, Chrysostom, Ambrose, and many other distinguished Fathers. And even after the great corruption and apostacy of the Church, according to Flodoardus, an ecclesiastical historian, the *hypothesis* of a limited atonement had made such little progress, that one Gotteschalchus, a monk, "in order to make himself known to the people, and to raise himself to *peculiar* notoriety, selected for discussion *novel doctrines*, among which this was one of the chief: that our Lord Jesus Christ was not crucified and put to death for the redemption of all mankind, but only for those who are saved." This *novel doctrine* of Gotteschalchus, we are told, was discussed and condemned, first by

the Synod of Mentz, and afterwards by Hincmar, archbishop of Rheims, who assembled another synod, and committed Gotteschalchus to confinement in a monastery, that he might not disseminate his errors. This, it appears, was the commencement of the great controversy on the extent of the atonement, on which subject antagonistic opinions were propagated and maintained by many eminent dignitaries of the Church and the most learned synods and councils. It will be seen from the above historical facts, that the doctrine of universal redemption is no "*novel* upstart opinion of yesterday," but that it was universally embraced and proclaimed by the most distinguished worthies of the first four centuries; and, before the Augustinian dispute with the Pelagians, it was never questioned, and "subsequently, during the palmy days of the schoolmen, the most eminent divines were content to rest in the maxim: Christ died for all sufficiently, but for the elect effectually."

(2.) Some of the most eminent and successful reformers were men who believed and preached the doctrine of *universal redemption*. Luther, the most distinguished and successful reformer—if not the first whose preaching shook the Vatican, baffled the subtle schemes of the propaganda, and aroused the whole of Europe from her death-like slumber—was an advocate of the doctrine of universal redemption; and on this subject he seemed to dwell with peculiar delight and extraordinary effect.

In his commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians (chapter i. 4), he speaks very pointedly and emphatically in favour of this *divine truth*. He asserts that "Christ assuredly hath taken away the sins, *not of certain men only*, but also of the *whole world*." And, when speaking of

Christ as "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world," he says: "Not only my sins and thine, but also the sins of the *whole world*, either past, present, or to come." And even John Calvin, though a strong advocate of unconditional predestinarianism (which is irreconcilable with unlimited atonement), did not believe in a restricted redemption. This is evident from many passages which occur in his commentary. On John i. 20, he says: "When John says the sin of the world, he extends this favour indiscriminately to the whole human race." On Romans v. 18, he says: "Christ suffered for the sins of the *whole world*, and by the kindness of God, he is offered *indiscriminately* unto all, though all do not embrace him." And on Mark xiv. 24—"This is the blood of the New Testament which is shed for many"—he gives us his views in the most unmistakeable language. He says: "But, under the term many, he does not mean a part of the world, but the *whole world*, the *whole human race*;" and he expresses himself in many other places in a manner equally explicit. (Those who question the correctness of the above version, may consult the original for themselves.) It is said that Calvin, on his dying bed, a few days before his decease, said: "I testify also and profess, that I humbly seek from God, that he may so will me to be washed and purified by the Great Redeemer's blood, shed for the sins of the human race, that it may be permitted me to stand before his tribunal under the covert of the Redeemer himself!"

Henry Bullinger, a celebrated Swiss reformer, who immediately succeeded Zuingli, held the same opinion as Luther and Calvin in reference to the extent of the atonement, and was more evangelical than either of them in

reference to personal salvation. Hence he says: "The Lord died for all, but all are not partakers of this redemption, through their own fault. The Lord excludes *no one* but him who excludes himself by his own unbelief and unfaithfulness." Benedict Aretius, another eminent Swiss theologian, says: "Christ died for all; yet, notwithstanding, all do not embrace the benefit of his death, because by their own wickedness, and the corruption of their nature, they despise the offered grace."

Wolfgang Musculus, a learned German reformer, and a distinguished professor of divinity at Berne, says: "The redemption is not destined for one nation, but for the whole world. That reprobate and deplorably wicked men do not receive it, is not through any scantiness of the grace of God, nor is it just, that, on account of the children of perdition, it should lose the glory and title of universal redemption, since it is prepared for all, and all are called to it."

Bishop Latimer, "the constant martyr of Jesus Christ," in one of his sermons, preached in 1552, proclaimed this glorious *gospel truth* in very bold and impressive language. He said on that occasion: "Christ shed as much blood for Judas as he did for Peter; Peter believed, and therefore was saved; Judas would not believe, and therefore he was damned; the fault being in him only, and nobody else." Quotations from the works of the most illustrious reformers in the various European nations, in favour of this doctrine, might be multiplied to almost any extent.

(3.) In the creeds and confessions of faith of the principal reformed churches, the same *evangelical truth* is explicitly expressed. Hence, in the first "Confession of Helvetia," written in 1536—in the latter "Confession of Helve-

tia," written in 1566—in the "Confession of Augsburgh," written by Melancthon, and presented to Charles V. in 1530—in the "Confession of Saxony," written in 1551—in the Confession of Faith used in the English congregations at Geneva—in the English Confession found in the works of Bishop Jewel—and in the "Heidelberg Catechism," used in the reformed churches and schools of the Palatinate, and composed 1563—the doctrine of universal redemption by the death of Jesus Christ is most clearly and explicitly set forth.

In the Homilies and Articles of the Established Church of England, this doctrine is expressed in the most unequivocal and indubitable language. In the second Article, after affirming the true divinity and perfect manhood of the Saviour, it is said of our Lord: "Who truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of men." "*All actual sins of men*" must include all the sins ever committed by the whole human race. In the fifteenth Article the same doctrine is evidently implied, where, speaking of Christ, it says: "He came to be the Lamb without spot, who, by the sacrifice of himself once made, should take away the sins of the world." And in the thirty-first Article, on the "one oblation of Christ," &c., it is more fully expressed in the following language: "The offering of Christ once made in that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for *all the sins of the whole world*, both original and actual."

These terms and expressions clearly show that the compilers of the formularies of the Church of England believed that Christ died, not for the elect only, but for all



men without exception, or for the sins of all mankind. It is also introduced in the Devotional, or Communion Service of the Church. And we cannot reasonably suppose that it would appear in such a service, and in the form it does, had it not been regarded by the compilers of the Litany as a doctrine to be believed, and suitable to cheer and comfort the soul. In the prayer of consecration, the communicant is instructed to say, "Christ suffered death on the cross for our redemption, and made there a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the *whole world*." And in the Catechism, the child is instructed to believe that Christ died for all mankind: "I believe in God the Son, who hath redeemed me and all mankind." Also, in the Homilies of the Church of England there are numerous passages of the same import. The reader may consult the first, "on the sacrament," and the second, "on the passion of Christ," and he will there find the doctrine of universal atonement explicitly declared.

(4.) Most commentators, both ancient and modern, and a great number of the most learned divines and eminent theologians, have expressed their views in favour of general redemption. Among the many eminent biblical scholars who have agreed on this point, I might mention Whitby and Beveridge, Macknight and Lardner, Scott and A. Clarke, Arminius and Wesley. Many others also might be named who held the same opinion.

Archbishop Usher says: "The Lamb of God offered himself a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world," &c. Bishop Davenant clearly expresses the same opinion, and adds: "Show me an individual of the human race, to whom the minister of the gospel may not truly say, God so loved

*thee* that he gave his only-begotten Son that *thou shalt* not perish but have everlasting life." Edward Polhill, in his work on the "Divine Will, and the Execution of *Eternal Decrees*," argues very powerfully and conclusively in favour of the universality of the atonement; and so does the celebrated Dr. Williams, in his great polemic work on the "Equity of Divine Government, and the Sovereignty of Divine Grace." (See ch. v., p. 252, edition 1813.) The great Robert Hall and the apostolic Fletcher advocated this doctrine; and so did Dwight and Bellamy of America; and thousands more great and learned men, in every age and in every Christian nation, have avowed their dissent from the doctrine of a particular redemption, or limited atonement, and have strongly advocated *the great gospel truth*, that Christ, "by the grace of God, *tasted death for every man*." These thousands of learned men may slightly differ in opinion "in reference to certain details of the doctrine, and on various collateral points," but they all perfectly agree as it regards the all-important truth, namely, that the Saviour died to make an atonement for the sins of the whole world. The *objection*, therefore, to the universality of the atonement, on the ground of its not being the opinion held by the great and the learned, by the fathers and the various councils, synods, and national Churches; and that it is a "novel upstart doctrine," is the offspring of either ignorance or untruthfulness. If all great and good Christians have not believed it, in my humble opinion the majority of that class, in every age, have been on the side of the apostles and the ancient fathers; and we have strong reason to conclude, that were it not for the academical training which the ministers of certain communities

undergo, during their introductory studies and collegial graduations, the doctrine of a particular redemption, as well as many other controverted points of speculative theology, would soon be numbered with the theological errors of the past. We scarcely see it possible for a young man, with his mind free and unbiased, taking the word of God for his infallible guide, to come to any other conclusion than that the Saviour died to atone for the sins of the whole world ; for the whole drift and current of its inspired statements in reference to this subject is, that Christ died to atone for *all sin*: “ He died for all ;” “ He gave himself a ransom for all ;” “ He tasted death for every man ;” “ It pleased the Lord to bruise him, and to lay upon him the iniquity of us all ;” “ The Father sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world,” &c. The signification of this class of passages we have before investigated, and have shewn that they declare and set forth, in the strictest sense and in the clearest light, the universality of the atonement.

(5.) The most eminent theologians and successful preachers of the gospel, *in the present day*, advocate the doctrine of a general redemption. And this evangelical class is on the increase, so that there are but comparatively few in the present day who hold the limitarian view of the subject, and they, generally speaking, are men of very limited attainments.

Thousands of ministers belonging to the Established Church of this country, whose piety and high ministerial attainments have distinguished them from their limitarian brethern, preach this doctrine ; and many talented and influential ministers belonging to the Congregationalists vindicate the same *gospel truth*. The preaching of this grand

and glorious doctrine from the pulpits of the two great bodies of Methodists (Wesleyans and Primitives), is one cause of their great success in winning souls to Christ; and all the minor bodies of Methodists—namely, the “Methodist New Connexion,” “Bible Christians,” “Association Methodists,” &c., whose labours have been owned of God—have been mindful to give this doctrine a prominent place in their ministry.

8. The limitarian view of the atonement, we presume, in most cases is embraced for the sake of *consistency*. Those who advocate this notion, first from their peculiar views on the doctrines of the eternal decrees of God in reference to election and reprobation, and having come to the conclusion that “God foreordained whatsoever comes to pass” (of course including both the deeds and destinies of men), and that they are unconditional and unchangeable, they therefore cannot see it consistent to believe that Christ died for all, *though it be explicitly stated in the Bible*, as we have already shewn. And, in fact, to believe “that God eternally elected a certain number of mankind unto life,” and “a number which cannot be increased or diminished,” and that “none other can be saved, but must eternally perish, God having left nothing to our own wretched choice,” is certainly inconsistent with the notion that Christ died to save all men. Hence the awful doctrine of eternal and unconditional decrees seems to form the basis of the doctrine of a limited atonement: Unconditional election and reprobation is therefore not the doctrine of the Bible.

(1.) It is inconsistent with one of the most comfortable and glorious doctrines of the gospel, namely, that Christ died for all men, which is an expression of God’s universal

love towards the whole human race, and it is calculated to engender doubts in reference to God's sincerity, for he is represented in Scripture as desiring the salvation of all men. (1 Tim. ii. 4; Eph. iii. 9; Isa. xlv. 22; Ezek. xxxiii. 11.) Do not these assertions and expostulations imply that God really desires the salvation of all men? But if Christ died for the elect only—or if he died for all, but none except the elect can be saved—God cannot, as an all-perfect Being, desire the salvation of those whom he decreed should be lost. We therefore must conclude, that either the Divine Being is insincere, and uses delusive words in the above passages, or that Christ died to save all men. The former supposition is inadmissible; hence we infer God never unconditionally decreed any to damnation.

(2.) The Calvinistic doctrine concerning decrees is inconsistent with the fundamental elements and essential principles of God's moral government, and therefore must be erroneous. Dogmatic theology asserts that God is not only the Almighty Ruler of the physical universe, but also the Moral Governor of all intelligent beings; and this doctrine no rational and enlightened Christian will dispute. And it is manifest, in God's Word, that he governs mankind by certain moral laws, which are sanctioned, or made obligatory, by rewards and punishments: "God will reward every man according to the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or bad." But if the actions and destinies of men were decreed from all eternity, they cannot really be accountable for their actions, because they are *occurrences* over which they have no control whatever. These views are maintained by Jonathan Edwards, in his "Remarks on Philosophical Necessity," (Inquiry, part iii.

sec. 3 and 4), where he says:—"Natural inability, arising from the want of natural capacity or external hinderance, without doubt wholly excuses, or makes a thing improperly the matter of command. Now, if we suppose that man's actions are absolutely decreed, or fore-ordained, then he is certainly hindered from doing otherwise than that he is decreed to do. The almighty power and wisdom of God has determined what he shall do, and this forth-putting of Omnipotence cannot be frustrated, or overruled, or altered; and this renders void all commands, and excludes either praise or blame," and, of course, thereby (according to the principles of righteous government) nullifies rewards and punishments. Therefore, according to our ideas of God's mode of government in relation to mankind, the doctrine of foreordination, and unconditional decrees, is totally at variance with the principles of divine government, and the moral character of God. The Editor of the "Evangelical Repository," (No. 1, page 12,) speaks out very strongly on this subject. He says: "If the volitions (or inner acts) be as much necessitated as the falling of a stone, when left unsupported, a stone so falling as to cause the death of a man, is as guilty as a human murderer. In short, there is in that case no distinction between physical and moral; no good, no evil; no heaven, no hell; yea, no God; and Shelley was right when he exclaimed,

'Necessity! thou Mother of the world!'

Shall Christians thus sympathise with infidels?" God forbid. Man has a capacity for moral action, and is capable of volition; his actions therefore, rising from his

choice and determination, are the fundamental causes of divine approval or condemnation. If this truth be admitted, the doctrine of God's decreeing all events, which implies that he is the author of all sin and moral evil, as well as the author of all good, is anti-scriptural, and is repugnant to every pious thought and feeling respecting God's moral nature.

(3.) The predestinarian notion of the divine decrees, and the ideas associated therewith, are inconsistent with the *Justice of God*. This is a logical deduction from the preceding arguments. For, if divine justice is the same, in reference to its moral character, as human justice, which we have before proved to be the case, we cannot do otherwise than conclude, that for God to punish man for doing what he was compelled to do, would be an act of injustice. When we speak of God's sovereign prerogative, and his absolute right to act according to his eternal will and mind, we ought, on the one hand, to be careful not to give a false representation of his divine authority, nor to restrict his infinite majesty and greatness, and, on the other hand, we should cautiously avoid representing him as a despotic tyrant. While we contemplate his eternal majesty and independent greatness, acting and ruling according to his own will and mind, among the armies of heaven above and the inhabitants of the earth beneath, we must remember that he delighteth in mercy, that his moral character is good, and that all his ways are righteous. He is full of compassion, long-suffering, forbearance, and mercy, ready to forgive iniquity, transgression, and sin, "but by no means clearing the guilty." He will not allow the impenitent sinner to escape with impunity. It is a fact, too

plainly asserted to be denied by any one who has a regard for truth, that the Scriptures everywhere speak of God, in reference to the ministration of his justice, as punishing men for *unbelief* and *rebellion*, as the former leads to the latter. But if "whatever comes to pass in time is the execution of eternal and Almighty decree," how can it be proved that man, in doing what God has thus decreed, is guilty of *rebellion*?—*impossible*! For, whatever he does, he is only fulfilling the will and decrees of heaven; and, therefore, to punish man for so doing, is incompatible with justice. We wish to be distinctly understood, that we do not believe that God was laid under any moral obligation to redeem the human race, or that his justice would have been tarnished had he left the first apostates to perish in their sins. But will God, as a righteous governor, punish the son eternally for the iniquity of the Father? We think not. Had no saving grace been provided for mankind, the human race, we think, would not have been perpetuated. The Calvinistic inconsistency on this subject, which seems to impeach the justice of God, is in admitting what they cannot deny—what the Bible most clearly and emphatically proclaims, namely, that the gospel should be preached to "all the world, and to every creature," and that all men who hear the gospel are commanded to believe in Christ for salvation. This admission, when viewed in connection with their notions on election and divine decrees, involves the fallacy of their system. They also admit, according to their preaching and writings, that God's great command, claiming man's confidence and obedience, is enforced by promised rewards and threatened punishments. Those who believe and obey shall be saved, while those who



refuse and disobey shall be damned, &c. And many of them go further than this. They admit that the non-elect, who hear the Gospel (but of course, according to their notions, cannot obey it), will be punished with greater severity than those who never heard it at all. Now I would ask, in the name of reason, is this justice? Can this mode of procedure, attributed to the Divine Being, be in harmony with the wisdom, purity, and eternal rectitude of the Divine Mind? We call upon those who advocate such a system to make it manifest, as they have up to the present time failed to do so. All their reasoning on this subject is a mass of darkness, confusion, and error. If God has made an atonement for the elect only, why should the gospel be preached to any other persons? It has been very properly asked: "Is it just that the non-elect should be tantalized with the proclamation of an atonement which is not meant for them, and which was not made for them? Is it just that they should not only be tantalized by its proclamations, but commanded, in the very proclamation itself, to receive it, and threatened with damnation if they refuse offered grace, and be driven into much sorer punishment than they would have otherwise incurred, for not accepting it? Is it just to command a man to take what does not belong to him, and what never can be his, and which he never can get in possession, and then to punish him with tremendous severity for not committing the impossible robbery?" (Evangelical Rep., page 14.) Such are the important questions proposed by one of the most profound biblical scholars and adept theologians of the present day; and we think they cannot be satisfactorily answered. Those who think otherwise may try their logical skill.

## XXII. EXTENT OF THE ATONEMENT.

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### ON THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY.

THE resurrection of the body is a doctrine taught in the Bible; though not so clearly in the Old Testament. Christ considered this doctrine of great importance, and preached it. The resurrection of the body was distinctly taught by the apostles. St. Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians xv. considered. The identity of the body preserved; this is a great mystery. Christ is the author and efficient cause of the resurrection. The consummation of our salvation. H. Kirke White's poem on the resurrection.

THE universality of the atonement comprehends the doctrine of a general resurrection: "To wit, the redemption of our body." Rom. viii. 23.

The resurrection of the body forms a very important article of the Christian religion. It is a doctrine which was never taught by the Greek philosophers or sages of antiquity, and consequently never found a place in any ancient system of pagan theology; but in the New Testament Scriptures it is clearly revealed, and spoken of as a part of the work of human redemption.

We shall, in the first place, prove that this doctrine is explicitly taught in the Bible, and in the New Testament especially; and, secondly, shew that the resurrection of the dead is a part of the great work of redemption.

I. There will be a general resurrection of the dead.

1. This is emphatically and *particularly* a scriptural doctrine; that is, apart from the Word of God, it was unknown to the learned men of ancient times; and where the light of revelation has never penetrated, it is equally unknown to the moderns. There are some great theological truths clearly revealed in the works of nature, consequently come within the apprehension of our grosser senses. These may be believed, and partially understood, by those who have not the Bible; but the doctrine of a general resurrection of all human bodies is to be found in the Word of God only. There certainly are some faint analogies in nature, but they are not so particularly corresponding to the resurrection of the dead as would lead even the most ingenious philosophers to infer that there will be a general resurrection of *all human bodies*. The inspired Word of God therefore is the only source from which we can gather clear light, conclusive arguments, and infallible evidence on this important subject. Under the Old Testament dispensation, this doctrine was but very imperfectly understood; it was nevertheless revealed by God to the holy prophets, and taught in the ancient Jewish Scriptures.

Job, who is supposed to have lived prior to the days of Moses, says: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me." Job xix. 25, 26. The Psalmist, in anticipation of a glorious resurrection to eternal life, says: "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."

Psalm xvii. 15. And, in Psalm xix. 15, he evidently refers to the same subject, where he says : “ But the Lord will redeem my soul from the power of the grave.” The word *soul*, in this passage, means *life* ; and the resurrection of the body is a redemption of life. Isaiah says : “ Thy dead men shall live ; together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust, for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.” Isaiah xxvi. 19. Whatever may be the primary import of this passage, it may certainly be applied to the resurrection, on which subject the phraseology is very significant and expressive. The prophet Daniel clearly predicts the resurrection in the following expressive language : “ Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” Daniel xii. 2. It is sufficiently clear, from these passages, as it is also from others, where the doctrine is not explicitly stated but evidently implied, that the ancient Jews had a knowledge of the resurrection of the body. And to this doctrine a large proportion of the Jews, in our Saviour’s time, assented ; others doubted it, and some denied it altogether. Martha said unto Christ, in reference to her brother Lazarus, who was dead : “ I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” John xi. 24. But, while some believed it, others denied it, “ for the Sadducees say there is no resurrection.” Acts xxiii. 8.

2. Christ himself evidently considered this doctrine of great importance, and uniformly taught it in opposition to the Sadducees and the learned sages of antiquity. In his conversation with the anti-resurrectionists, as recorded

in Matt. xxii. 29-31, he speaks of the resurrection as a subject beyond all doubt or contradiction : " Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Our Lord adopted this mode of argument to meet the peculiar ideas of the Sadducees, who denied the existence of spirits, and that the soul of man survived his body, and consequently they concluded it would be absurd to suppose the body would rise again. Now Christ here asserts that the souls of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are still living, and consequently it is reasonable to believe that their bodies also will be raised to life again. This is evidently implied in the peculiar mode and form of our Lord's argument. And in John v. 28, 29, he emphatically asserts that there shall be a *general resurrection* : " Marvel not at this ; for the hour is coming, in which *all* that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth ; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." . It is sufficiently clear, from these portions of Scripture, that our Lord, in his public teaching, strongly maintained the doctrine of the resurrection of the body.

3. The same great and important truth was inculcated by the inspired apostles. St. Paul frequently refers to this subject when defending the doctrines of Christianity before the various magisterial tribunals to which he was

brought to answer for his conduct in preaching the gospel. In his epistle to the Romans, he says : “ But if the Spirit of him which raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” “ There shall be a resurrection of the dead ; both of the just and the unjust.” And in his first epistle to the Corinthians (ch. xv.), he debates on this subject in a highly argumentative style ; in which arguments he shews the possibility and certainty of these bodies being reanimated and raised by the almighty power of God. The conclusion of his inspired reasoning is, that our bodies shall be raised incorruptible and immortal, which by the doctrine of analogy is shewn to be consistent with the highest degree of deductive evidence. Though this subject is of a metaphysical character, and profoundly mysterious in the process of its accomplishment ; the inspired penman proves, by the doctrine of analogy, that it is consistent with the operations of nature and the almighty power of God, as developed in the various phenomena of the material universe. He first adduces certain important facts, on which he rests his subsequent arguments and logical deductions ; namely, that Christ *died and was buried*, “ and that he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures.” Then he asserts, that in reference to his resurrection we have the most satisfactory and substantial evidence : “ He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve ; after that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once ; after that of James, then of all the apostles ; and last of all by me also, as one born out of due time.” Beginning at the 12th verse, he proposes the following question : “ Now if

Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead ? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen : and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain," &c. " But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept." " As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits ; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end," &c. The drift of the apostle's argument is, that Christ having risen from the dead, and thereby demonstrated his power over death, he will ultimately put forth that power in the complete subjugation of the power and dominion of death : " He must reign until all his enemies are put under his feet ; and the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death ;" and he will "swallow up death in victory." Therefore, the resurrection of the dead, viewed in relation to Christ's power and universal dominion, is an event which must, according to the very nature of things, take place. As surely as Christ is risen, we also shall rise.

But the disputant may say, How can the dead live? How can inanimate matter, which has undergone a thousand transformations, be reanimated and reunited, element to its kindred element, bone to its kindred bone, be covered with the same flesh, and be so reconstituted as to stamp the whole with original identity? We must admit that there are some operations involved in this mysterious process which no human mind can fully comprehend. The inspired apostle does not profess to furnish us with a philosophical elucidation of this work of reanimating and

rebuilding the material part of man. He, however, seems to anticipate objections which assume a philosophical character: "But some man will say, how are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come?" To these questions he replies somewhat abruptly: "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die." He inverts, or completely turns, the objection; as if he had said, Thou vain and foolish man, death, so far from hindering the resurrection and reanimation of the body, is necessarily a state antecedent to such an occurrence. This he illustrates first by similitudes. He refers to the sowing of "bare grain," which dies in the earth, but it *pleaseth God* that the "bare grain" shall produce its "own body"—the different kinds of flesh, and the various degrees of glory, which are manifest in the heavenly bodies—and then adds, "So also is the resurrection of the dead; it is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption," &c. It is sown, or committed to the ground, in a state of corruption, in some cases "just ready to putrify," and in that corruptible state it passes through various chemical changes, until it completely decays, and ultimately "returns to *dust* whence it came." But the renewed body, springing out of that corruption, shall rise incorruptible, immortal, and incapable of decay. "So, when this corruption shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, 'Death is swallowed up in victory!'" The Apostle John says: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened . . . and the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were



judged every man according to their works." (Rev. xx. 12, 13.) It is evident, from the above passages, that there will be a general resurrection. The same body which death separated from the soul, will be reanimated and reunited to its kindred spirit. This is a great mystery, and if viewed apart from revelation, simply on natural principles, and according to the laws of chemical philosophy, it appears impossible. The same body, or elementary particles—which, according to the opinion of great and learned men, must have formed the substances of various minerals, vegetables, and animals, and even other human bodies—therefore, to be preserved amidst all the dissolutions and transformations through which they must necessarily pass ere the morning of the resurrection, is certainly a mystery too profound for any human mind to comprehend. But the conservation of these elementary particles, *necessary to the identity of the body*, is certainly not a work impossible with God; "for with God all things are possible." The body of a human being during his lifetime, if he live to an advanced age, undergoes many changes; and though at 50 years of age he may not have the same particles in his nature which he had the day on which he was born, yet he is *identically the same being*; and in this sense it is the same body that was born, the same that dies, and the same that shall rise again; so that "Mr. Locke's objection to the idea of the same body, is a mere metaphysical quibble." It is evident to all who believe the Bible, that personal identity will be perpetuated, in relation to both body and mind, through both time and eternity; but what constitutes this identity, especially in reference to the body, we cannot *fully understand*, no more than we can understand the dying and

quickenings, and natural production of the "bare grain" which is deposited in the earth.

II. Christ is the author and efficient cause of the resurrection. "I am the Resurrection and the Life," said the Saviour; that is, He is the efficient cause of it. In John v. 25-29, Christ says: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." In this passage the Saviour substantially asserts that he is the author and bestower of spiritual life, and that at the last day he will raise the dead: "We must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. In chap. vi. 40, we find the same sentiments: "This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day." St. Paul says (1 Cor. xv. 21, 22): "For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all died, *even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*" The resurrection of the body is spoken of as a redemption by power and conquest: "He must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet: the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." The apostle, in the same chapter, when describing the august manner in which Christ will vanquish this last

enemy, and consummate the glorious work of redemption, says: "Behold, I shew you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." (Isa. xxv. 8.) Then all the captives will be liberated.

In prospect of this final and glorious conquest, the apostle exclaims: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Hence Christ has redeemed the body as well as the soul; we should therefore "glorify him with our bodies and souls which are his." The believer lays down his mortal body, in sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection to eternal life. This hope is beautifully described in the following lines by H. K. White:—

Through sorrow's night, and danger's path,  
Amid the deep'ning gloom,  
We, soldiers of an injured King,  
Are marching to the tomb.  
There, when the turmoil is no more,  
And all our powers decay,  
Our cold remains in solitude  
Shall sleep the years away.

Our labours done : securely laid,  
In this our last retreat,  
Unheeded o'er our silent dust  
The storms of life shall beat.  
Yet thus lifeless, thus inane,  
The vital spark shall lie,  
For o'er life's wrecks that spark shall rise,  
To seek its kindred sky.  
These ashes too, this little dust,  
Our Father's care shall keep,  
Till the last angel rise and break  
The long and dreary sleep.  
There love's soft dew o'er every eye  
Shall shed its mildest rays,  
And the long silent dust shall burst  
With shouts of endless praise.

## XXIII. THE CONDITIONS OF SALVATION.

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**Introductory remarks.** Good works are not the ground and meritorious cause of salvation. *Repentance*: The fallacy and inconsistency of objecting to repentance. The nature of repentance. The radical meaning of the Latin, French, and Greek words which are translated repentance. The scriptural and theological meaning of repentance. Repentance proved to be necessary to salvation. *Faith* is necessary to salvation. What saving faith is. Dr. Pye Smith's definition of faith. Faith implies knowledge, or it is collaterally connected therewith. Wesley's definition of faith. True saving faith explained in scriptural language. Saving faith produces inward evidence and full assurance. Faith, in Scripture, is frequently associated with love. Is faith the gift of God, or the act of man? Various opinions on this subject. Faith, when properly considered, in all its relationships, is both the gift of God and the act of man. Does faith precede or follow repentance. The opinions of Professor Buck and Dr. Dwight on this subject appear incorrect. General remarks.

THE grand object and design of the Saviour in assuming our nature, and offering himself as a sacrifice for the sins of the human race, was, as we have already shewn, to provide salvation for the whole world; and in this salvation there is comprehended several blessings, which, when viewed theologically, may be distinctly considered, and which claim our particular attention; such as Pardon, Justification, Adoption, Regeneration, Sanctification, and Eternal Life; and these blessings are received on the conditions, that we repent of our sins and truly believe in Christ as our Saviour.

Dr. Hannah says: "Regeneration, or the new birth,

constitutes that spiritual change which is wrought in the penitent believer by the agency of the Holy Ghost, while he graciously attests our acceptance with God. It is therefore received through the same act of faith that leads to our acceptance; but, in what we may humbly term the order of divine operation, it immediately follows the witness of the Spirit, and comprehends that inward renewing which, by means of his witness or testimony, he accomplishes in us, as the commencement of our Christian holiness." And the same author, referring to "Watson's Institutes," part ii. chap. xxiv., at the beginning, says: "Though that excellent writer has certainly fallen into an inadvertency, when, in his general arrangement of topics, he places regeneration before adoption, and therefore before the witness of the Spirit, I can attribute this inadvertency only to very excusable haste, because it is inconsistent with the views which that eminent theologian habitually entertained, and which he has ably advocated in other portions of his writings." R. Watson, on the Concomitants of Justification, shews that the root of holiness is love; that there is no true love preceding a manifested pardon; that the manifestation of pardon succeeds the act of pardon in the Divine Mind; that the agent who manifests this secret and invisible act of the mind of God is the Holy Spirit; that there is no regeneration where there is no love and holiness," &c. According to this mode of reasoning, the logical inference is, that the order to be observed in reference to the arrangement of the above subjects should be: 1st, Repentance; 2nd, Faith; 3rd, Justification; 4th, The Witness of the Spirit; 5th, Adoption; and 6th, Regeneration. It may nevertheless be observed, that some eminent theologians

place regeneration before adoption. When soberly and impartially considered, it seems very difficult to conceive of one taking place before the other ; for “ although adoption may seem to precede regeneration in order of nature, yet not of time ; they may be distinguished, but cannot be separated.” There is no adoption, says Charnock, without regeneration : “ Adoption is not a mere relation : the privilege and image of the sons of God go together. A state of adoption is never without a separation from defilement.” 2 Corinthians vi. 17, 18. “ The new name in adoption is never given till the new creature be formed.” Having made these introductory remarks, which will be necessary for the reader to bear in mind, let us now consider on what conditions man receives pardon, justification, and all those blessings and privileges which are comprehended in salvation through Christ.

1. It is not on the ground of good or meritorious works. On this subject the Word of God is clear and emphatic. St. Paul’s epistle to the Romans settles this question beyond all doubt or contradiction. In the first place, he proves man’s apostacy, and the universal depravity of human nature, which consequently affects all men, of every rank, class, and nation. From which fact he argues the absolute impossibility of man’s being saved by works of righteousness : “ By the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified.” It is “ not by works of righteousness which we have done,” or can do, “ but by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.” In a manner equally explicit and emphatic are similar declarations in every part of the New Testament, and especially in the apostolic writings. It would

be superfluous to argue the question ; for, if salvation be of Christ, (namely, by virtue of the atonement made by him, which we have before proved,) it cannot be of works.

We shall now proceed to shew what is necessary, on the part of man, in order to his obtaining salvation.

I. REPENTANCE.—Repentance is laid down in such terms, and enforced in such a manner, by Christ and his apostles, as to leave no doubt, in reference to its being necessary, on our part, ere we can obtain the blessing of salvation. I am aware that, of late, this has been disputed, and even by some popular preachers it has been palpably denied. A few years ago, I heard a very distinguished and talented minister preaching on this subject, when he endeavoured to shew that repentance was unnecessary, and insisted that faith alone in Christ was required; in favour of which notion he quoted many passages of Scripture. In his expositions he seemed to lay great stress on the “utter uselessness of repentance,” &c. But his arguments in favour of his peculiar notions were evidently founded in error, and his conclusions were necessarily fallacious. His evident design was to shew, that those who advocated the necessity of repentance, put it in the place of faith, whereas they are careful to draw a line of distinction, so that they cannot be either confounded, or the one substituted for the other. And such expressions as “repentance is useless and unnecessary,” dropping from the lips of learned divines and professed ministers of the Gospel, are *unutterably shocking*. That ignorant, whimsical, and self-conceited individuals—who delight in innovation, and, like the ancient Athenians, are always seeking for something new—should indulge in such novel fancies, and



make such unscriptural assertions, is no marvel. But for educated men, and learned theologians, to embrace and propagate such anti-scriptural notions, is unaccountable. We admit that repentance, which includes conviction of sin, godly sorrow, and the forsaking of sin, cannot entitle the sinner to pardon, and, if he never believes in Christ, he will be damned, notwithstanding his repentance. But does this admission prove that repentance is unnecessary? By no means. It only proves that all of God's requirements must be complied with, or man cannot be saved. And to tell a convinced sinner that it is useless for him to feel godly sorrow, to hate sin, and try to amend his life, is only trifling with his feelings; or otherwise it betrays great ignorance of the real state and disposition of his mind.

You might as well tell a man who is ready to die for want of food, or who is burnt up with the raging fire of thirst, that his sensations of hunger and thirst are of no use, and that it is wrong for him to feel so; when at the same time the man cannot help it. Or you might as well tell an afflicted man that it is useless for him to feel his sickness, or wish to be healed. A proper method of treating the above cases would be to aid the hungry and thirsty, by supplying them with food and drink, and by pointing out to the afflicted man a cure. The application is easy.

In the *first* place, the sinner *must repent*; he must feel hungry and thirsty. He must be convinced that he is sick, or he must see himself as a lost, undone, hell-deserving sinner; and whenever this is the case, the sinner repents before God in dust and ashes. It cannot be otherwise.

God has made it necessary. It inevitably results from the laws of mind, influenced by a sense of our relations to God and our responsibility.

*Secondly.* If we wish to be instrumental in the salvation of a convinced, penitent sinner, what must we say to him? Must we urge him to deeper repentance? No. Must we tell him that his repentance is useless? No. We must tell him to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and he shall be saved. But,

*Thirdly.* In proclaiming the gospel to unconverted and convinced sinners, we must insist on "repentance towards God," as well as "faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." In fact, we do not see it possible for a man to savingly believe in Christ for salvation who has never clearly seen and felt himself to be a sinner. And the moment he sees himself to be a lost, undone sinner in God's sight, he will truly and unfeignedly repent. Having made these preliminary and desultory remarks; let us consider more particularly—

1. *The nature of repentance*, and then, on scriptural grounds, urge its necessity. The Latin word *repo*, which literally signifies "I creep," has been translated *repent*. But in this sense it is used zoologically, and applies to those animals which move with their bodies close to the ground. The theological term, *repentance*, is supposed to be derived from the Greek word *phienō*, to kill, as having been originally the price of blood. From this root comes the Latin word *pœna*, which signifies punishment, penalty, pain, suffering, remorse, &c.; and from *pœna* comes *pœnitere*, to repent, grieve, &c. The French word *repentir*, is translated repent; which signifies, to change the mind from some painful motive, to feel such sorrow for sin as

produces amendment of life. In theology, repentance signifies that sorrow for sin which produces newness of life. Hence "godly sorrow worketh repentance." Godly sorrow, which is occasioned by conviction of sin, leads to an amendment of life. The original Greek word (*metánoia*), says a learned author, signifies, "or properly denotes an after-thought, or the soul recollecting its own actions, and that in such a manner as to produce sorrow in the review, and a desire of amendment ; a change of mind or purpose." And in this sense it is used in Scripture. It is also worthy of remark, that in many places the facts of the case are expressed when the word *repentance* does not occur. As in Isaiah: "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together," &c. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him: and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Isa. i. 16-18; lv. 7.

Though neither repentance nor faith are mentioned in these passages, both are implied; for those who come to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them who diligently seek him. St. Paul, in his defence before Agrippa, speaks of repentance as an act of turning to God: "Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: but shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance." Acts xxvi. 19, 20. It is very clear from this statement,

that the apostle in his preaching insisted upon the necessity of repentance. But we remarked that repentance signified remembering with sorrow; which was the case with St. Peter after he had denied his Lord and Master: "He remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out and wept bitterly." Matt. xxvi. 75. This remembering with sorrowful feelings was repentance. The prodigal son repented when he returned to his father, saying: "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." He evinced deep humility, contrition, and acknowledgment of guilt, submission, and a desire to amend his life. The design of the Saviour, in relating the parable of the prodigal son, was to exhibit the characteristics of genuine repentance. St. Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians, says:—"Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world worketh death." 2 Cor. vii. 9, 10. From this, and the preceding passages, we learn several important facts relative to the nature of repentance.

(1.) That there is such a thing as a false or spurious repentance—a mere worldly sorrow that worketh death—a sorrowful feeling of mind which merely rises from a dread of temporal or judicial punishment.

(2.) That there is such a thing as godly repentance, which originates in conviction of sin, and produces self-abasement, and sincere and holy sorrow,

which leads to humble confession and reformation of life. Hence,—

(3.) True repentance is an experimental and practical change—a turning from sin and satan to God and holiness.

2. We shall now endeavour to shew that *repentance is necessary to salvation*. This doctrine is explicitly insisted upon by John the Baptist. When the Pharisees and Sadducees came unto him to be baptised, he said unto them: “Ye brood of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth fruit meet for repentance, and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.” Matt. iii. 7, 9. By the fruits of repentance, we understand a manifestation of it. The principles, and feelings must exist, before they are manifested by outward effects.

This requirement was also emphatically inculcated by the Saviour: “Now, after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: *repent ye* and believe the gospel.” Mark i. 14. St. Matthew says: “From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, *Repent*: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Again, when the Scribes and Pharisees manifested their disapprobation against him for associating with publicans and sinners, he said unto them, “They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” Mark ii. 17. On another important occasion he said to certain individuals, who seemed to vaunt their religious superiority over the miserable

Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifice, and over the eighteen on whom fell the tower of Siloam: "I tell you nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Luke xiii. 3. And the Saviour "taught not as a scribe, but as one having authority;" and his teaching is infallible. His word is truth; it is steadfast, and abideth for ever.

The duty of repentance was also inculcated by the apostles, after they received their divine commission: "They went out preaching that men should repent." Mark vi. 12. At the day of Pentecost, when those who were pricked to the heart cried, "Men and brethren, what must we do to be saved?" Peter said unto them, "*Repent*, and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts ii. 38. In the following chapter, when they were called in question respecting the cure of the lame man, St. Peter said to the multitude, "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." Acts iii. 19. St. Paul, in his missionary tour through Judea and Greece, taught publicly, and from house to house, "testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, *repentance* toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Acts xx. 21; xxvi. 20. It is evident from the above passages, that John the Baptist, Christ our great and infallible teacher, and his apostles, preached the *necessity of repentance*. It is also deducible from many other passages, a few of which we shall distinctly notice. It is the will of God that all men should repent: "The Lord is longsuffering to usward,

not willing that any should perish, but that *all should come to repentance*." 2 Peter iii. 9. God by various means leads men to repentance, and is said to "grant them repentance." Acts xi. 18; Rom. ii. 4. The end of Christ's suffering was, that *repentance* and remission of sins might be preached to the world. Hence, after his resurrection, he said to his disciples, "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Luke xxiv. 46, 47. And again, "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance." Luke xv. 7. It is also said that "Christ is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, that he may give repentance and remission of sins." Acts v. 31. From all these passages, taken either separately or collectively, we may fairly and logically infer the absolute necessity of repentance. To say that repentance is not necessary, is in effect to say that Christ and his apostles taught false doctrine; and this is taking away the foundation of Christianity.

Without true repentance, there can be no saving faith. A faith without repentance is a dead faith, to which God has promised nothing. A man who never repents of his sins can no more get to heaven than an atheist or a devil can get there, whatever he may believe. One of the principal reasons why sinners are damned, is because they do not repent. Many of them believe as devils do. They believe, and fear and tremble; but they never repent, never hate sin, forsake it, and turn to God; consequently their

mere belief in the Saviour cannot save them. It is not a faith which is divine in its operations, working by love and purifying the heart. To say that repentance is unnecessary, or that God will save a sinner simply because he believes that Christ died for him, is equivalent to saying that man can go to heaven in his sins, which is a palpable contradiction to the word of God: "Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord." We have proved that all have sinned; that God will not pardon our sins unless we repent, in other words, unless we forsake sin and turn to him; that unless our sins be forgiven us while we live, we cannot go to heaven when we die. Repentance, therefore, is necessary. These views have been maintained by learned and eminently pious divines in every age of the Christian Church. And though of late the necessity of repentance has been disputed by a class of theologians and preachers, who have been labouring to attract notoriety, they cannot overturn the plain and numerous declarations of eternal truth. However men may change in their opinions, whatever new doctrines may be invented to supersede the truths of the gospel, however great and numerous the errors of sectarian religionists, "The word of the Lord abideth for ever." In concluding this article, it may be necessary to add, (and I must be distinctly understood,) that in our opinion repentance *alone* cannot secure our salvation.

II. FAITH IS NECESSARY.—Seeing that faith, in every part of the Bible, is laid down as the grand and ultimate condition of salvation, it is our duty to understand its real meaning. We often hear it said, both from the pulpit and in religious conversation, that "faith simply signifies believing;" but this is no explanation at all. In reality it



is saying that *faith is simply faith* ; because faith and believing are words equivalent in signification. Dr. Pye Smith says : “ Both are derived from words, in the two ancient languages, which have been the sources of the English tongue, whose primary idea is *holding fast*, or, when applied to the action of the mind, *trusting, relying, or confiding*.” In another place, after tracing the etymology of the word *believe*, he says : “ The radical idea is *grasping with the hand, laying hold on*.” This idea, when applied to the mind, and considered in relation to salvation, involves assent, credence, and trust ; that is, assent to and credence in the facts reported in the gospel ; and trust or reliance in Christ alone for salvation. The understanding assents, the will determines, and the affections rely on Christ as the only surety and Saviour : when pardon is bestowed, the work of justification and regeneration take place, and the spirit of adoption is received. Saving faith, therefore, does not merely assent to evangelical truth, nor is it one particular act or habit of the mind. It cannot be limited to any one faculty of the human soul. It is complex, and consists of various acts and developments of the mind which, without the least confusion, pervade each other, and by a delightful co-operation mutually promote and assist each other. This view of the subject may not agree with the popular notions of faith. I am aware that many imagine that it expresses a simple idea ; hence, they have been strenuous in asserting the peculiar simplicity of faith, and the perfect ease with which it may be comprehended. One writer says, “ Faith is simply saying *yes* to the promise of God.” This laconic definition may be correct, in a qualified sense, but it falls very short of conveying a full and proper idea

of all that is comprehended in saving faith. To believe in Christ for salvation implies—

1. *Knowledge.* The Scriptures make mention of faith in such terms as manifestly to intimate, that knowledge is involved in its nature and exercise. The apostle says: “I know whom I have believed,” and “we believe, and are *sure*,” says St. John, “that thou art the Son of God.” Christ said unto the woman of Samaria, when speaking of the superiority of the Jews contrasted with the Samaritans: “Ye worship ye know not what; we know what we worship.” John iv. 22. Faith is also called *knowledge* in 2 Peter i. 2, and ii. 20.

Besides, the very nature of faith itself, which signifies assent to truth, reliance on truth, holding fast, &c., necessarily pre-supposes, first, that God has revealed some truth, and secondly, that that truth must be made known to us ere we can believe. It would be absurd to say that a person must assent to any truth of which he is utterly ignorant, and respecting which he does not know that any testimony worthy of credit exists. This is the faith of the deluded votaries of Popery, which is nothing but a blind credulity, unreasonable and unscriptural, to which God has promised nothing. The faith which bringeth salvation operates in harmony with the dictates of enlightened reason. The manner in which true faith is produced in the mind, or the means by which it is brought into existence, proves that in order to believe savingly we must have a knowledge of the truths which we are required to believe: “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” That is, by the preaching and hearing of the gospel, the knowledge of God and the

plan of salvation are made known. Jesus said: "It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." John vi. 45. By the internal voice of God speaking to their hearts and consciences, they are divinely taught the way to Christ. If faith, therefore, is generated in the heart by means of instruction, both external and internal, it must certainly be founded in knowledge; for knowledge is the immediate effect of instruction.

It must be admitted that many men, of scanty knowledge and limited theological attainments, are strong in faith; and not a few of this class have died martyrs in the cause of truth. This however does not prove that faith is better defined by ignorance than by knowledge. Those martyrs and faithful followers of the Lamb, who were comparatively uninformed respecting other matters, undoubtedly saw most clearly and distinctly that the truths for which they suffered and bled were most certain and divine. They had clear and comprehensive views of Christ their Saviour, the fulness of the atonement, and the all-sufficiency of divine grace to save them to the uttermost. Hence, by faith they were enabled to glorify God with their bodies and souls, and to seal the truth of religion with their blood.

It may be said that knowledge is not a part of faith, but only a concomitant, or something collaterally connected therewith. But, even viewed in this light, and supposing this to be a correct view of the subject, the combination of the constituent parts is so essentially connected, in point of metaphysical affinity, that it would be improper, if not

impossible, to disunite them. It must be distinctly understood that we do not say that knowledge is faith, or that faith is knowledge, but that knowledge to some extent is necessarily comprehended in saving faith. On this subject Dr. Pye Smith says : “ The first element or constituent part of faith is a *comprehension* of some assertion, whether of a fact or a sentiment, communicated to the mind as an object *to be known*; and this apprehension must be carried to such a degree of completeness, that we *become conscious* of understanding the object in a manner sufficient for the purpose of a satisfactory apprehension.” In another place the same author remarks, that in reference to *religious believing*, or faith in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, “ There is an apprehension of an assertion, with a competent understanding of its meaning. This assertion is the Divine testimony that God hath given of his Son.” Wesley says, “ Faith implies both a supernatural evidence of God, and of the things of God. It is a kind of a spiritual light exhibited to the soul, and a supernatural sight or perception thereof.”

2. But saving faith is something more than spiritual illumination and an apprehension of the objects of faith. There is a notion held by some theologians, that an impenitent sinner is justified by what is termed “ *passive belief* of the truth.” That is, “ without doing anything, without feeling any motion in the heart, without any act, exercise, or exertion of the mind whatever.” This doctrine is unreasonable, and incompatible with universal experience, and, of course, without any foundation in the Word of God. Faith assents, replies, takes hold, and holds fast ; it *works* by love. It is the exertion of a principle, and its

power and activity are expressed by the inspired writers in language strikingly emphatic. Faith wrestles and fights, prevails and conquers, looks to Christ, receives him, eats his flesh and drinks his blood, trusts in him, lives in him : "The life that I now live is by faith in the Son of God." —*Paul*. Faith sees the all-sufficiency of Christ as a Saviour, the suitableness of that salvation which he has provided, and the willingness of God through Christ to save. And with these enlightened views, the soul approaches Christ, and embraces him in all the fulness of his mediatorial character and offices, and relies on him as a Saviour infinitely powerful, gracious, and faithful. The nature and power of saving faith is very correctly exhibited in the following quotation : "The believing soul, with lowly reverence, prostrates itself before the Most Holy and Righteous Jehovah ; confesses the vileness, guilt, and inexcusableness of sin ; acknowledges the justice of condemnation ; renounces self-dependence and every ground of creature trust : ' But thy word of truth informs me of a Saviour, thy beloved Son, the brightness of thy glory, the express image of thy person, incarnate, obeying, suffering, and dying.' ' And that he invites and commands sinners to come to him, and assures them that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life ;' ' This precious assurance *I believe*, embrace, and rest upon ; it is all my salvation and all my desire ;' ' Lord, I believe ! Help thou mine unbelief ! Blessed Jesus, into thy hands I commit my soul, my immortal interests, my greatest and highest welfare ; upon thee I cast myself wholly ;' Embracing thy righteousness, atonement, purifying grace, redeeming, preserving power ; wait-

ing for thy mercy unto eternal life ;' ' Lord, to whom should I go ? Thou hast the words of eternal life.' ' Saviour of sinners, Redeemer from guilt and misery, Prince of Life, Author of eternal Salvation ! On Thee I cast myself ; save, or I perish ! Speak but the word, and thy servant shall be healed.' ' Thou wilt not reject the contrite sinner's plea, his only plea, **THYSELF !** I am thine ; O save me ! I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord. Behold, God is my Salvation. I will trust and not be afraid ; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song, He also is become my Salvation.' " I have read many elaborate definitions of faith, but I have nowhere seen it better described than in the above quotation, which, the reader will perceive, principally consists in a compilation of sacred texts, judiciously arranged, with some slight verbal alterations. In the above passages are set forth all the elements and properties of divine or saving faith ; namely, knowledge, or a revelation of saving truth to the mind, the assent to the truth, confidence and reliance on Christ as the only Saviour, and a full assurance : " I will trust, and not be afraid," &c.

Faith, which bringeth salvation, produces an inward evidence of our acceptance with God, and the glorious experimental realities of religion. The apostle says, " Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Heb. xi. 1. Here the apostle speaks, in my judgment, metonymically ; that is, he puts the effects for the cause : " The substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," are rather the effects of faith, than faith itself. Living faith is such a firm assurance in the mind, in reference to the good things of religion, which we hope for, that they are as sensibly and

as strongly realized as any substance which is tangible, or as that which we see with our bodily eyes. St. Peter said to Christ, "We know and are sure that thou art the Son of God." And every true believer in Christ is assured of his sins forgiven, his interest in Christ, and his adoption into the family of God; and is therefore "sure that Christ is the Son of God." It was this blessed assurance which enabled the apostle to say, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me." 2 Tim. iv. 6-8. The same apostle teaches the doctrine of *divine assurance* in his epistle to the Hebrews: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, . . . . let us draw near with a true heart, in *full assurance* of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering: (for he is faithful that promised)." Heb. x. 20.

In reference to the exercise of faith, it is a remark worthy of our attention, that it is associated very frequently with love, in order to distinguish its purity and divine nature. As in Gal. v. 6, with 22: "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but *faith* which worketh by love." And in Eph. i. 15, 16: "Wherefore I also, after I heard of your *faith* in the Lord Jesus, and *love* unto all the saints, ceased not to give thanks for you." And in ch. iii. 17: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by *faith*; that ye, being rooted and

grounded in *love*." The same apostle, exhorting the Thessalonians to attend to divers precepts, says : " Let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of *faith* and *love* ; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation."

1 Thess. v. 8. And in his first epistle to Timothy he says : " And the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ was exceeding abundant, with *faith* and *love* which is in Christ Jesus." (i. 14.) Also in his second epistle he says : " Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in *faith* and *love* which is in Christ." (i. 13.) St. John says : " And this is his commandment, that ye should *believe* on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another." Hence, divine faith and Christian love are inseparably connected ; and by the existence of pure and disinterested love we may therefore test the character of our faith.

Another important question for us to consider is, whether faith be the gift of God or the act of man. This is a very critical question ; and opinions widely opposite have been strongly maintained by men of learning and piety. Those who maintain that faith is a simple act of the mind or understanding, assert that man has power to believe of himself, without any special aid of the divine Spirit. Others maintain that " saving faith is a principle wrought in the heart by the divine Spirit." Many of those who hold the former opinion say, " faith cannot be increased," and that " it is useless to pray for faith," &c. ; while many, who maintain the latter notion, argue that man has no power to believe or embrace the truth, until specially wrought upon and aided by the Holy Spirit. Thus the contending parties have, in many instances, run into extremes. On this subject we may remark—



1. That faith, considered abstractedly, as an act of the understanding, is the action of man, and he is therefore strongly exhorted and commanded in Scripture to put it in operation; and in fact he is threatened with punishment if he does not believe; hence, unbelief is regarded and dealt with as an act of rebellion or disobedience: "He that believeth not shall be damned."

2. But if we associate with the act of faith the necessity of evidence and knowledge, which we must do in order to constitute it a rational exercise, and acceptable to God, we shall see into the propriety and necessity of praying to God for divine assistance, for him to strengthen and increase our faith; or, in other words, to enlighten our minds, and furnish us with clear and powerful evidence, by the light and influence of the Holy Spirit, the means by which our faith is strengthened and increased. Such is our spiritual imbecility and darkness, that we have great need to pray, "O Lord, enlighten thou the eyes of our understanding," and reveal unto us in clearer light the objects of saving faith. "Let thy right hand uphold us, while our souls follow after thee." And this is substantially praying for God to increase our faith. If faith be duly considered, in all its relationships, it is both the gift of God and the act of man. The apostle says, "By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." Some say that the gift refers to grace, and not to faith; this may be correct, but I think it *implies* both; for without grace there could be no saving faith. God has given the grace by which the mind, in its attempts at believing, is divinely assisted. Man, therefore must now either believe or perish. The *act of faith* is

essential to salvation, therefore without it we cannot be saved. I think it is President Edwards who says, "I assert that faith, and its opposite, unbelief, are in all moral cases voluntary exercises of the mind, are proper objects of commands and prohibitions, and proper foundations of praise and blame, reward and punishment." This notion, I think, is consistent with both reason and Scripture.

It may be proper now to consider the order in which faith stands in the Christian system. Every intelligent person, whether he is learned or unlearned, who has seriously thought on this subject, will have found some difficulty in reference to where, in the order of time, to fix faith; namely, whether before or after repentance. This difficulty generally arises through want of discriminating between simple belief of the truth, and saving faith in those *particular truths* which bring salvation.

Some divines of the Calvinistic persuasion maintain that faith is subsequent to regeneration and repentance; while other theologians, from a variety of considerations, see it necessary to differ from this opinion. Professor Buck says: "Perhaps the following remarks on the subject may be considered as consistent with truth and Scripture: 1st, Regeneration is the work of God enlightening the mind and changing the heart, and in order of time precedes faith. 2nd, Faith is the consequence of regeneration, and implies the perception of an object; it discerns the evil of sin, the holiness of God, gives credence to the testimony of God and his word, and seems to precede repentance, since we cannot repent of that of which we have no clear perception, or no concern about. 3rd, Repentance is an after-thought, or sorrowing for sin, the evil nature of

which faith perceives, and which immediately follows faith. 4th, Conversion is a turning from sin, which faith sees and repentance sorrows for, and seems to follow and to be the end of all the rest."

President Dwight held and taught the same opinions in reference to the order of faith. Hence, in one of his sermons on regeneration, after having described the penitent sinner, he represents him as "receiving a new and virtuous disposition, styled in Scripture a 'new heart,' 'a right spirit,' an honest and good heart," &c. But he never mentions one word about either repentance or faith, as the condition on which the sinner receives salvation, but seems to regard it solely as an effect of divine grace antecedent to any act on the part of the penitent, as an act of divine grace and mercy; and then, in the following page, he says: "The first great *effect* of this disposition is the exercise of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The next *effect* of this disposition is that which in Scripture is called repentance unto life; and in theological discourses evangelical repentance." If this teaching be correct, the sinner is—1st, regenerated; 2nd, he believes; 3rd, he repents, and 4th, he is converted. Though these are the opinions of learned men and eminent professors of theology, the intelligent reader will, in our judgment, find some difficulty in harmonizing them with the Word of God. Is it not more scriptural to view the process of salvation as taking place in the following order:—

1. By the instrumentality of the *Divine Word*, and the agency of the Holy Spirit, the mind of the sinner is divinely illuminated.

2. He believes the report, or yields to the strivings of

the Spirit, thence follows conviction of sin, which produces godly sorrow; which,

3. Leadeth to true repentance, viz., hatred of sin, loathing of it, turning from it, dread of punishment, &c., which leads him to cry, "What must I do to be saved."

4. He must believe in Christ, by which he obtains pardon, justification, and a new heart; then,

5. Commences a new life of sanctification—a life of faith, holiness, and practical piety. According to this arrangement, the mind believes, or assents to truth, before repentance takes place; which, I think, must be the case, for so long as the mind is barricaded against the truth, by unbelief, the word cannot operate, and the divine Spirit cannot, consistently, perform his office. The Saviour himself could not do many mighty works, in a certain place, because the inhabitants would not believe on him. Not that the almighty power of the Saviour was limited or fettered; he was still the Almighty; but, as the people despised and rejected him, he, in justice, refrained from blessing them. So when people in our days close their eyes against the light, and harden their hearts in unbelief, they quench the strivings of the Holy Spirit, and remain in darkness and sin. They shut up every avenue of the soul which would let in the least ray of spiritual light: "Men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil; and they will not come to the light lest their deeds should be made manifest." The manner in which the words *repentance* and *faith* are used in the Scriptures, and especially in the New Testament, clearly shews that they are exercises of the mind on which are hinged the conditions of our salvation. I mean, that if we do not repent and believe,

we cannot be saved. We cannot be regenerated, justified, made holy, or receive a "new heart and right spirit," before we repent and believe. The following are among the many passages which, in my opinion, prove the correctness of the above statement. "Repent ye therefore, and believe the gospel." "I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." "Go ye into all to world, and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; he that believeth not is condemned already." "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." "Repent ye, therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." If a man never believe, he will never be saved.

The above passages need no comment. They plainly shew, that in order to be saved we must *repent* and *believe*. And it is nowhere stated in Scripture that repentance and faith are the offsprings of regeneration, or that man must not or cannot repent and believe until he is regenerated. This scheme is of human invention. And Dwight himself, in his sermon on the Influence of Faith, says: "Men become the children of God by faith." In the same discourse he strenuously argues that "God has constituted faith the means of our justification." There is, therefore,

either something contradictory in his teaching on this vital question, or we cannot understand his particular meaning. However this may be, we can understand the Word of God, which uniformly teaches that man is justified and saved by faith in Christ. We have now shewn that Christ, by his incarnation and humiliation, by his sufferings and death, redeemed the world, and thereby provided salvation for the whole human race ; in consequence of which *all who truly repent and evangelically believe* shall obtain pardon, justification, regeneration, and adoption into the divine family, and thereby be constituted heirs of eternal life. This is the commencement of that holy state of living called sanctification. This salvation is a full and complete deliverance from all sin, its power and influence, its nature, practice and consequences. It is also a free salvation, flowing from the infinite grace of God, and is bestowed freely on all who repent and believe, an account of the satisfactory atonement made by the Son of God, and because he ever lives to intercede for us at the right hand of his Father. And this great work can be wrought in the heart instantaneously. According to our faith it shall be done unto us. The moment we believe, salvation is ours ; and if we continue to believe, it will be ours for ever.

## XXIV. THE BENEFITS OF REDEMPTION.

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### PARDON AND JUSTIFICATION.

The notions held by the Roman Church respecting the pardon of sins are false. The notions held by Antinomians are false and dangerous. The pardoning of sin originates in God's mercy. Christ is the only way whereby God's pardoning mercy is displayed. The pardoning of our sins is essential to salvation.

REDEMPTION by Christ secures PARDON to all who comply with the conditions of salvation. Clear and scriptural views on this subject are of the greatest importance, both in relation to ourselves, and in leading us to adopt correct ideas of the divine character. The notions entertained by the Papal Church on this subject, as set forth in the Council of Trent, are derogatory to the Divine Majesty, and incompatible with the doctrine of the Atonement made by Jesus Christ as a full and complete satisfaction for sin. (See Sess. xiv. Can. i.) The idea of penance being necessary to secure divine pardon, seems to argue the insufficiency of the sacrifice of Christ, and is inconsistent with the doctrine of free grace, which is so fully and explicitly taught in the word of God. Christ having once suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, divine justice requires no more satisfaction; free pardon is bestowed through the

merit of his death. The Papists are not the only professing Christians who entertain erroneous ideas on pardon. The peculiar notions embraced by Antinomians, relative to the manner in which God bestows pardon on the elect, on account of the imputed righteousness of Christ, are both unscriptural and tremendously dangerous; and, when properly and seriously considered, seem to be an impious insult offered to God. It represents the infinitely wise and all-perfect Being as regarding things differently from what they really and truthfully are; as things done as though they had not been done. They represent the elect as not having sinned, though they have actually committed thousands of sins. We are told, "their sins are no longer theirs, but by being imputed to Christ he becomes a sinner"—"the greatest sinner in the world." This mode of thinking and speaking is presumptuous, and leads to the most confused and incomprehensible notions respecting the forgiveness of sin. The pardon of sin does not consist in excusing, defending, or in any way palliating crime, so as to render it less vile or blameworthy. Neither are we to suppose that, when God pardons sin, there is any alteration in the attributes of his moral nature, so that sin is any way less hateful in his sight, or that he is less implacable and more kind at one time than at another. We remark—

1. The pardon of sin originated in God's infinite mercy; and, in consideration of the transgressor's complying with the stipulated conditions of pardon, which he has most graciously ordained in the scheme of human redemption, he determines to remit the punishment incurred, or the penalty due for the violation of the divine law. The mercy of God is that attribute of the divine nature which inclines him



with readiness to relieve the miserable and pardon the guilty. And that this is an essential attribute of the moral nature of Deity, is evident from his Word. When the Lord passed before Moses on the holy mount, he proclaimed his name and his nature in the following significant expressions: "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. Here is the great original source of all those glorious effects which are developed in the grand scheme of human redemption: God's infinite mercy. This being the cause of the atonement, must be regarded as the ground of pardon. Some have argued that the misery of his creatures is the cause of his mercy, inasmuch as mercy implies, not only goodwill, but pity and commiseration towards those in distress. But this notion, in relation to the Divine Being, is unfounded. God's mercy is not a passion or affection of the mind, as it is in man; but, correctly speaking, is the result of his sovereign will, and is guided by infinite wisdom and true benevolence; consequently his mercy is free; nothing out of himself can be the cause of it. The miseries of his creatures may give rise to a manifestation of this attribute, but still God's mercy, considered in itself, is the original source of pardon. If God had not been infinitely merciful, no Saviour would have been provided, and no pardon would ever have been extended to the human race. For—

2. Christ is the only way whereby God's pardoning mercy is displayed. This is most emphatically predicated by St. Paul, in his epistle to the Ephesians: "But God,

who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved); and hath raised us up together, and hath made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus." Eph. ii. 4-7. And in the preceding chapter, speaking of Christ, he says: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Eph. i. 7. The justice of God having received satisfaction by the blood of Christ, which is said to cleanse from all sin, St. John concludes, that "If we confess our sins, he is *faithful* and *just* to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"—a complete act which will never be repealed, so long as we continue to walk in the path of the just: "Your sins and your iniquities I will remember against you no more for ever."

3. The pardon of our sins is essential to salvation; because, unless our sins be forgiven us while we live, we cannot go to heaven when we die. However we may amend our morals, or refrain from the commission of future transgressions, so long as the past catalogue of crimes stands against us, they will for ever prevent our admission into the kingdom of heaven, stand against us at the day of final account, and will constitute our eternal damnation. Pardon is not offered to the dead, nor salvation proclaimed to the damned. We should therefore earnestly pray that God, who is rich in mercy, would forgive us all our sins, through Jesus Christ, our only Saviour and Redeemer.

# THE BENEFITS OF REDEMPTION.

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## JUSTIFICATION.

The nature of Justification defined. Legal Justification. Justification considered in a theological sense. Mr. Weale's definition of Justification. Justification includes the forgiveness of sins, but, in the judgment of some theologians, is a more comprehensive term. Justification invests the pardoned sinner with certain rights and claims, which God, through Christ, is pleased to bestow. Pardon and Justification not uniformly the same; but justification and pardon are used in Scripture to denote a state of Salvation. Is a believer *really* justified? or "is he *only treated* as a justified person?" Man's justification is through Christ only. This doctrine is consistent with infinite justice. The person (Jesus Christ) on account of whose merits millions of sinners are justified, must be infinitely holy and almighty; he must also have a human nature; and must therefore be God and man united.

JUSTIFICATION is the result of the atonement made by Christ. Apart from the perfect obedience and righteous sufferings of Christ, man cannot by any means be justified. Therefore nothing in the whole system of revealed theology can be of greater importance than this great and vital question: "How shall man be righteous with his Maker?" How shall I, a sinner, obtain acceptance and favour with God? We shall not at present consider this subject at large, but only simply define its nature, and shew that the atonement of Christ is the efficient or procuring cause of it.

I. The nature of justification may be ascertained by a careful investigation of the true meaning of the word.

According to the author of the "Universal Dictionary," the radical import of the original word *jus* is *right*; from this springs *justus* or just, which means upright, equitable, incorrupt, honest, &c. Justification therefore is the act of justifying, or shewing to be just or conformable to law, or proving a person to be clear of blame or free from guilt. This is its legal meaning. But in a theological sense, as frequently used in Scripture, it signifies that act of grace by which a man, in virtue of the sufferings and death of the Saviour, is held as just in the sight of God as though he had never violated the divine law, and through that grace is entitled to eternal life. On this subject Dr. Pye Smith says: "Justification, in a theological sense, is the state of an accountable creature, in which he is regarded by the Omniscient and All-righteous Judge as being free from blame, exempt from punishment, and an object of Divine approbation." President Edwards' definition of justification is very similar. He says: "A person is said to be justified, when he is approved of God as free from the guilt of sin and its deserved punishment, and as having that righteousness belonging to him which entitles to the reward of life."

Mr. Wesley says: "The plain scriptural notion of justification is pardon, the forgiveness of sin. It is that act of God the Father, whereby, for the sake of the propitiation made by the blood of his Son, he sheweth forth his righteousness (or mercy) by the remission of the sins that are past." (Sermon v. vol. i. page 51.) And again, in page 544, he says: "Justification is another word for pardon. It is the forgiveness of all our sins, and, what is necessarily implied therein, our acceptance with God. The

price whereby this has been procured for us (commonly termed the meritorious cause of our justification) is the blood and righteousness of Christ ; or, to express it a little more clearly, all that Christ hath done and suffered for us, till he ‘poured out his soul for the transgressors.’” “The immediate effects of justification are, peace with God,” &c. On these quotations we might remark—

1. That the term justification, as used by the inspired writers, in reference to the salvation of sinners, includes the forgiveness of sins. But, it is argued by some theologians, that justification is a word of more extensive meaning than the word *pardon*, inasmuch as it comprehends the idea of a right or title to the rewards of Divine approbation. They argue thus : the moral law of God being a perfect code, agreeable to the rectitude and wisdom of an all-perfect Being, embraces two classes of precepts ; namely, the *prohibitory* and the *requisitive*. The *prohibitory* is that which forbids committing moral evil ; the *requisitive* is that which inculcates the performance of moral good. If the latter were uniformly complied with, it would supersede the former ; or, in other words, if men loved God with all their hearts, &c., they would never commit sin, and therefore would live in a state of justification, and be entitled to eternal happiness. “This shews, that in order to the justification of a sinner, he must not only be discharged from the penalties incurred by his violations of God’s prohibitory laws, but he must be invested with the rights and claims which God has been pleased to annex to obedience.” This accords with the definition of another eminent divine, who says, “The justification of a sinner in the sight of God consists in the bestowment of a full pardon of

all his sins, and a legal title to happiness in the world to come, as the meritorious result of the atoning sufferings and perfect obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ, conferred and received in the way which God has appointed, namely, by faith in the gospel." This view of the subject seems to be in accordance with the following passages of Scripture : "That whosoever believeth in him (Christ) *should not perish, but have everlasting life.*" John iii. 16. "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive *forgiveness of sins, and inheritance* among them which are sanctified, by faith that is in me." Acts xxvi. 18. And again, in Romans v. 1, 2 : "Therefore, being justified by faith, *we have peace with God*, through our Lord Jesus Christ : by whom also we have access by faith into this grace, wherein we stand, *and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*" A careful examination of these passages will shew that justification is the *obtaining of pardon*, which saves us from punishment, and being brought into a *state and condition* in the sight of God whereby we have *a title and claim to everlasting life.*" In answer to the above, it may be remarked, that pardon is "forgiveness ; the release of an offence, or the obligation of the offender to suffer a penalty, or to bear the displeasure of the offended party." Whatever right we forfeit by sin, is restored by pardon ; for, if we suppose that after pardon we suffer the loss of some right or good forfeited, so far the penalty is not remitted ; therefore, so far we are not pardoned. A free and full pardon is therefore identical with justification in the evangelical sense. Viewing the subject *merely as a legal transaction*, there certainly is an essential difference

between pardon and justification. For instance, a man is arrested for a crime, which he is supposed to have committed ; the allegation against him is investigated, and he is proved to be a guilty man. But there is some palliation in the nature of the case ; the criminal is therefore forgiven, or he may be forgiven as an act of pure mercy. But such an offender, in the eye of the law, cannot be justified. If it be proved that the supposed criminal is not guilty of the crime laid to his charge, then he is justified, and entitled to approbation. But when the word pardon or justification is used in Scripture to denote the personal salvation of a sinner, we ought to understand that the other word, or the meaning of it, is implied. Because when God forgives a sinner he is invariably justified at the same time, and of course he cannot justify without first, or in connection therewith, pardoning him.

3. Both words are used by the New Testament writers to denote that state of personal salvation into which a man is brought subsequently to his conversion to God. When God, through Christ, saves a sinner, he is pardoned : his sins which are many are all forgiven him, and also, through faith in Christ, who has suffered in his stead, he is justified—stands clear of guilt before God. Therefore, the words *pardon* and *justification*, as we find them employed in the sacred writings, are designed to convey an idea of the fulness and completion of that salvation enjoyed by all true believers. And in the use of such expressions we cannot but admire the wisdom and goodness of God. They afford the fullest assurance that, when we turn to God in sincerity and in truth, he will and does forgive us all our past transgressions,

and on account of what Christ has done for us, he regards us as justified.

It is strenuously argued by many theologians, that in reality a repenting and believing sinner is not justified, "but only treated as a justified person;" and that "to insist upon a real justification is to adopt the notion of the Papal Church, which confounds it with sanctification." I cannot see either the force or the propriety of this mode of reasoning, though it be adopted by many great and distinguished authors. When God pardons a sinner he regenerates him at the same time; and in connection with that pardon and regeneration, the ungodly are justified. If the sinner were merely pardoned in a legal sense, and nothing more, not morally changed, he would not be really justified. Mr. Wesley, in his first vol. of Sermons, says, "Salvation from sin, and the consequences of sin, are expressed in the word justification, which, taken in the largest sense, implies deliverance from guilt and punishment; so that he who is thus justified, or saved by faith, is indeed *born again of the Spirit into newness of life.*" (Wesleyana, page 214.) This, substantially, is what we believe and contend for.

II. Sinful man can be justified through the righteousness and death of Christ *only*. To this effect speaks St. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans: "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no



difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ! Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting, then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Romans iii. 20-28. And this doctrine was proclaimed by the inspired prophets under the Old Testament dispensation: For unto him (Christ) give all the prophets witness, that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name. (Acts x. 43.) Isaiah exhibited him to the Jewish Church as a vicarious sacrifice, in the following significant and striking language: "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him: and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; . . . . . and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all." He was designated by Jeremiah, "The Lord our Righteousness;" because, by his sufferings and meritorious death, he procured our righteousness. Hence he is made unto all true believers "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." "God made him who knew no sin to be sin," or a sin-offering, "for us." He is the "Lamb of God," on whom our sins were laid. As we were all made, or constituted, sinners in the fall of Adam, so all true

believers are made, or constituted, righteous by Christ, the second Adam.

The doctrine of *Justification* through Christ, namely, as the result of his perfect obedience and atoning sacrifice, is perfectly consistent both with reason and the character of infinite justice—that is, when viewed in connection with the scheme of Divine mercy—the object of which is to procure the blessing of salvation for sinful and helpless beings, who are absolutely incapable of procuring such blessings for themselves. And that this was really the state and condition of fallen man, is evident to every intelligent and reflecting mind. As accountable beings, we are placed under the regulation of a code of moral laws, the character of which represents, in some measure, the infinite and unchangeable purity of the Divine nature ; therefore it forbids all sin, requires perfect holiness, and enjoins uniform obedience. If this be conceded (which I think cannot be denied), it is but a logical conclusion, that, in order to be able to act in accordance with the requirements of this code of laws, we must of ourselves be righteous. Now, we are conscious that this is not the case ; for we are all sinners, and confessedly guilty before God : “ There is none righteous, no not one,” &c. Romans iii. 9-16.

The great and important question now to decide is this: Does it appear possible, and compatible with the wisdom, justice, and mercy of God, that a series of moral actions, performed on behalf of helpless man by an infinitely righteous and all-perfect Being, together with the sacrifice of himself, should be found so transcendently excellent and infinitely meritorious as to deserve, as its proper reward, the justification of those for whom such

righteousness was performed, and on whose behalf such a sacrifice was offered. This appears to us not only "hypothetically possible," but highly consistent with the benevolent character of the infinite and all-righteous Judge of the universe. It is also in harmony with God's providential government, and is developed in innumerable instances which transpire in the history of human life. On this subject an eminent author says: "We constantly see families and other communities of men brought into the possession of ample enjoyment, as the consequence of actions eminently praiseworthy, performed by persons with whom they had some bond of conjunction, though they have in no way whatever concurred in the distinguished actions."

On this subject it may be necessary to remark, that the person whose righteousness is so complete, and whose death is so meritorious, as to bring about the justification of another person who is essentially unrighteous and "desperately wicked;" *yea, the justification of countless millions of such sinful beings*, who believe on him as their Deliverer—must be a *Divine Person*, uncreated, and possessing all the perfections of Deity: for such a superabundance of merit could not properly be ascribed to any created being, however exalted in rank or station, however mighty in power, or however benevolent and merciful in his nature.

Such virtue, ability, and glory belong only to the *Infinite One*. But further. He, on whose account man is justified, must have a relation to, and a union with, human nature; that being the only reasonable ground on which the Saviour's redundant merit can, in any way, be reckoned on man's behalf. Now, in Jesus Christ we see Supreme Divinity in union with perfect humanity, "*without sin.*"

He may therefore be regarded as being perfectly and infinitely righteous; and in consequence of that righteousness, and the all-sufficient merit of his death, he is the justifier of every individual of the human race who believes in him. Viewing the subject in this light, justification through Christ appears to be the only intervention for fallen man's restoration which could be devised and executed, so as to operate in harmony with the wisdom and equity of God's moral government of the universe.

Some have taken an objection to the idea of *Christ performing moral actions on behalf of man*, and think that it necessarily implies the high notion of imputed righteousness. But it may be replied that, although Christ fulfilled all righteousness *for himself*, and in a manner consistent with the infinite holiness of his moral nature, that being essential to his own perfections, man is nevertheless interested in, and benefited by, Christ's perfect obedience to the law; for if he had not rendered perfect obedience to the divine law, he would not have been perfectly holy in himself, and therefore could not have saved us by his righteous and meritorious suffering and death. In this *particular sense* man must be regarded as being benefited by the active as well as by the passive obedience of Christ. Mr. Wesley, in his various comments, &c., maintains this view of the subject. "The active and passive righteousness of Christ were never separated from each other."—Wesley's Sermon on Imputed Righteousness.\*

\* The doctrine of Imputed Righteousness is separately considered in Dissertation xxv.

## THE BENEFITS OF REDEMPTION.

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### REGENERATION.

**Various opinions on Regeneration. The radical meaning explained. Regeneration does not produce anything new, physically. It does not produce any additional intellectual attributes, or change the substance of the soul. It changes the quality of man's spiritual nature, that is to say, his principles, affections, feelings, &c. It is the work of the Holy Spirit. Regeneration enlightens the mind, rectifies the will, &c. It is productive of outward holiness. Some unregenerated persons are moral. Regeneration the commencement of a new life: gives victory over self, sin, the world, and Satan. When does regeneration take place? "Baptismal Regeneration" not scriptural. Regeneration is distinct from mere water baptism: This proved from Scripture. When does Regeneration take place, when viewed in relation to pardon and justification? Dr. Dwight's view of Regeneration not scriptural; shewn to be very defective and unsound. Regeneration is necessary: This proved from reason and Scripture.**

**In order to keep in our minds a proper connection of ideas, it may be necessary just to remind the reader, that regeneration must be considered as a blessed operation and state of saving grace resulting from the work of redemption. Like every other essential doctrine comprehended in the Christian system, it has been the subject of endless discussion, so that scarcely anything new can be advanced, either by way of explanation, or to shew its necessity in reference to man's salvation. The reason why theologians have written so extensively and critically on this subject is obvious. It is a doctrine of vital importance, and occupies**

a very prominent place in the New Testament Scriptures: it is therefore highly necessary that its nature should be correctly understood. Various opinions are received and propagated as to what regeneration really is, and by what process and agency it is accomplished in the human heart. Though all orthodox divines agree as to its being a renewal of man's spiritual nature, and that it is accomplished by a power or influence manifestly divine; they differ as to how, and when, and by what particular agency, this renovation is effected. The general opinion is, that whenever it takes place it is instantaneous, and effected solely by the agency of the Holy Ghost; but that it must be viewed in relation to the atonement, that being the sole cause of the restoration of fallen humanity, and as without this man must have for ever remained in his degenerate state. In discussing this important subject we shall—

1. Endeavour to understand rightly what is meant by regeneration, and what is implied in it in a theological sense. A proper knowledge of the meaning of the primitive or radical word from which regeneration is derived, may assist us in coming to a correct conclusion. Regeneration is derived from the Latin word *genero*, which is translated generate; and signifies to produce, to bring into life, to form, &c. To *degenerate* signifies to become worse, to decay in good qualities, to pass from a good or noble to a vicious or inferior state, to lose or suffer a diminution of valuable qualities, either natural or moral, to become base, mean, and corrupt. To *regenerate*, literally, is to reproduce. In theology it signifies to renew and transform the soul, from a state of sin and the image of Satan, to a state of holiness and the image of God. Regeneration therefore is

that change by which the will of man is subdued, his natural enmity to God and his law destroyed, and the principles of love and obedience implanted in the heart. This etymological definition of the word will assist us materially in coming to a correct conclusion in reference to its theological meaning. When man was originally created, or brought into being and life, he was in the moral image of his perfect Creator: wise, holy, and upright. When, through temptation and sin, he fell from his original virtuous and noble state, he became *degenerate*, lost his purity and happiness, and became base, corrupt, and miserable. When *regenerated*, he is produced anew. So completely is he renewed in his moral and spiritual nature, that the apostle says, "If any man be in Christ he is a *new creature*;" or, according to the import of the original, there is a *new creation*: "old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." 2 Cor. v. 17. We are not to suppose from this assertion—

(1.) That regeneration produces anything new, physically. In this respect a regenerated person is identically the same as he was before regeneration took place. The body and the soul being so closely united by the laws of nature as to constitute one complex being, they, to some extent, sympathize in each other's sorrows, and share each other's joys; and, consequently, when the mind, or soul of man, is renewed and made a partaker of the divine nature, and feels the powers of the world to come, the body is to some extent a participator in that joy. Hence the regenerated person glorifies God with his body as well as with his soul. But still the physical qualities of man's material nature undergo no transformation,

or physical change, in consequence of the renewal of his spiritual nature.

(2.) Neither does he receive any additional intellectual attributes, or undergo any change in reference to the substance of his soul. As we are not aware that man lost any of his intellectual faculties by the fall, it would be unreasonable to suppose that anything is added at his regeneration. The mind is substantially and identically the same after as before regeneration took place. Therefore by "a new creation," and the phrase, "old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new," we are not to understand that the substance of the original soul evaporates or passes away, and that a new soul is formed after the image of Christ. This would destroy the identity of the person, and necessarily lead to the most ridiculous and confused notions respecting man's accountability and the administration of divine justice, and many other considerations involved in the doctrine of apostacy, &c.

(3.) By regeneration, created anew, or "born again," and all phrases of similar import, we are to understand, a radical change of quality in relation to man's spiritual and immortal nature, by which he is enabled to lead a new and spiritual life. His principles and affections, his feelings and desires, his enjoyments and hopes, &c., are all new. His old, carnal inclinations, the natural proneness of the will to evil, and all the vicious propensities of the mind, are destroyed, and a complete new set of principles and affections are formed. This inward change is demonstrated by a corresponding change in the outward man, namely, in his moral conduct. The heart is the mainspring of moral action, consequently if that be under



the influence of, and regulated by, divine grace, uniform practical piety will be the result. A strict adherence to the divine commands is the most palpable evidence we can possibly produce in confirmation of our conversion to God. Hence, Christ said on a certain occasion : " By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Then, according to the above definition, regeneration is,

I. An experimental operation wrought in the heart by the agency of the Holy Ghost, and is experimentally felt and known by all who are the subjects of it ; for every faculty of the soul, and every element of the mind, partakes in some degree of the gracious renovation.

(1.) The mind, which was dark and uninformed respecting God, heaven, and eternal things, becomes enlightened. Hence, we read of the eyes of the understanding being enlightened. The dull, beclouded vision of the soul is spiritually illuminated—is " brought out of darkness into God's marvellous light." It is not the light of science, by which we discover the beauties and glory of the natural world, nor any kind of mere mental illumination. It is "*God's marvellous light*," the wonderful and glorious light of heaven, which breaks in upon the dark and dreary region of the soul, and unfolds to the eye of the mind such views of human nature and inward depravity as was never before revealed—lays open the corrupt depths of the heart, which " is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," the sight of which, together with a feeling consciousness of his entire inability to save himself, extorts from the awakened sinner the cry, " O ! wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?" But the entrance of this light into his mind further reveals

to him an all-sufficient Saviour, and the fulness and completion of the grand scheme of human redemption. It shews him God, not only in his magisterial character, but “in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.” It unfolds to him the moral grandeur and spiritual glory of the world of grace; and gives him to feel the spiritual import of the prophetic exhortation: “Arise, shine! for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.” “Unto you that fear my name, shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.”

(2.) Regeneration rectifies the will, as well as enlightens the mind. It not only makes discoveries of what is wrong, and the means by which we may be made right, *but it makes all right*, and fully restores the soul to a state of purity and holy joy. The *conscience* which was unfaithful, guilty, and polluted, in which state it was unable to perform its office properly, is by regeneration so restored and rectified that it is incomparably better qualified to perform its important office. The *will*, which naturally rises up in impious rebellion and implacable enmity against God and his divine authority, by regeneration is subdued, and brought into a state of obedience to the divine will. And all the passions being renovated, they are regulated by divine grace, flow in legitimate channels, and thereby produce perfect peace and pure delight. The *affections* are placed on things above. The regenerated loves God supremely, and this casts out all tormenting fears and distressing forebodings. He enjoys that peace which passeth human understanding, that joy which is unutterable, and full of glory: “He rejoices in hope of the glory of God.”

II. Outward holiness, or practical piety, is the evidence or proof of regeneration. On this subject it may be proper to remark—

(1.) Some unconverted men are so strictly moral in their general conduct, that, externally, they do not differ very widely from those who are truly regenerated. This well known fact has caused some misguided individuals to say, when palliating the misconduct of professors: “We cannot judge of men by their actions.” We must admit that in many cases it is difficult to come to safe and right conclusions; but, as a general rule, we know that if a man’s life is wrong, his heart cannot be right, whatever he may profess, or whatever allowance may be made for deficiency of religious knowledge. We know, too, that if a man walks uprightly, and is mindful in all things to do that which is lawful and right, he is “a good moral man.” in the ordinary acceptation of this expression. But this *alone* does not constitute a real Christian. If he is regenerated, in addition to his morality and benevolence, he will give a practical manifestation of a renewed and sanctified heart, in his *religious life*, his holy devotion, his fervent prayers, his burning zeal, his unfeigned humility, his living faith, and in his pure and disinterested love. Many men who are strictly moral, humane, and benevolent, know nothing of the inward peace and holy joy associated with the *religious* life of a true believer in Christ Jesus.

(2.) Hence, regeneration is the commencement of a new and spiritual life, in which we have power to glorify God with a holy deportment, to resist and overcome sin, for “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is

born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil." 1 John iii. 9, 10. By this we are to understand that when a man is born of God, or regenerated, he is free from sin, and though tempted and tried, he has power to resist it. Such is the purity and spirituality of this new and heavenly nature, that sin is repugnant to his feelings. He delights in the law of the Lord, and consequently *holiness* is the grand characteristic of his life. He also lives above the world.

"Conquerors of the world, we live in heaven, who live in God."

St. John says, "Whosoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." 1 John v. 4. "Love not the world, neither the things of the world; for if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." This shews that worldly-mindedness is incompatible with the love of God and pure religious feelings; so that the two principles or feelings cannot possibly exist together. By "*the world*," in this passage, we are not to understand the system of created things which compose the material universe; for these may be innocently admired, inasmuch as they unfold to us the glorious perfections of our all-wise Creator; but by "the world" is meant, the present corrupt state of things as they now exist in secular life, and especially in regard to those pleasures and interests which steal away the affections of the soul from God. A regenerated man can innocently enjoy the comforts of life which God gives to constitute our social happiness; but he has no inordinate attachment to the things of time and sense: so far he lives above the world.

As there are many confused notions on this subject, it may be necessary to set forth our views rather more definitely. A man is a slave to the world when, for the sake of any profit or pleasure, he willingly and deliberately transgresses the command of God. He overcomes it when he obeys the command of God at the expense of foregoing the pleasures and profits of the world. This conquest is a proof that he looks not so much at the things which are seen and temporal, as he does at the things which are unseen and eternal. Hence, "by faith he overcomes the world." He is a slave to the world when he cannot be content, patient, and resigned under the inconvenient circumstances in which Providence has thought fit to place him, but is craving after superiority of rank and station in life. It is a proof that he has overcome the world when, under the influence of enlightened views, he patiently submits to the wise arrangements of Divine Providence. He may strive by legitimate and prudent means to make advancement in life, but if he cannot succeed, he submits, saying, "The will of the Lord be done." The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away; "blessed be the name of the Lord."

A man is a slave to the world when he so clings to its treasures that he will not part with anything he possesses to relieve the wants of the needy, or to promote the interests of the cause of Christ, or when he studies and indulges in self-aggrandisement rather than in doing good to his fellow-men. He shews that he has conquered the world when he makes his possessions subservient to the best interests of man and the glory of God.

He is a slave to the world when he envies those who

are more fortunate and successful in their worldly schemes and enterprises than himself. This is a decided proof of his worldly-mindedness. He has overcome the world when, through grace, he has no such feelings of envy or worldly rivalry. A man has not overcome the world when he honours and esteems persons *purely* on account of their superior birth, fortune, or rank in life. This shews that he regulates his judgment and approbation by their outward appearance and situation in life, and is a proof that he is still carnal. A man has not overcome the world when temporal prosperity makes him proud and vain ; nor when he seeks to enjoy the great things of this life more than to enjoy the pleasures of that life which is pure and spiritual : “ *He that is born of God overcometh the world.*” The great and chief business of a regenerated man is, so to elevate his mind and affections, and place them on things above, that he can look down upon the vanity and emptiness of all earthly things with comparative indifference ; in which state he feels that he has completely overcome the world, the lusts of the flesh, and the pride of life. He is in the world, but not of it. His heaven-born soul dwells in a higher region, and basks in the rays of a brighter sun. He enjoys that spiritual-mindedness which secures life and peace : “ His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in it he doth meditate day and night.” Psalm i. 2. He enjoys the various means of grace ; they are as wells of life and salvation to his soul. Altogether he is a new man, lives in a new world, has new feelings, new desires, hopes, expectations and joys, pursues a new line of conduct, is dead to sin, but alive to righteousness, and the life he lives “ is by faith in the Son of God.”

III. When does regeneration take place? Some learned divines contend that it takes place at the time of baptism, whenever the rite is performed by a duly authorised person ; and, consequently, that baptism and regeneration are inseparable. This notion is what is technically called "The doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration," which of late has caused much discussion and controversy in the Established Church of England. It is evident, from various sentences in the creeds and ceremonies of the said Church, that regeneration and baptism were viewed by the compilers of the "Church Service" as being, in some way, inseparably connected. Hence, when a child is baptised in a private house, the minister, after baptising the child, is instructed to say: "We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this infant with thy Holy Spirit," &c. The Twenty-seventh Article says: "Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened, but it is also a sign of Regeneration, or new Birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive Baptism rightly are grafted into the Church ; the promises of forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed." But on this subject ministers belonging to our national Church differ very widely. Some believe in "baptismal regeneration ;" others believe that baptism is not regeneration, but that they are inseparably connected, and whenever the rite of baptism is legitimately performed, regeneration takes place ; while others, and perhaps the greater portion of them, believe that a person may be regenerated, or born

again, apart from water baptism, whenever a sinner brings forth fruit meet for repentance, and truly and unfeignedly believes in Christ for pardon and salvation ; and this we pronounce to be the doctrine of the Bible. The water of regeneration is spiritual, " A fountain opened in the house of David for sin and for uncleanness ;" or, in other words, it is by virtue of the atonement. Hence it is written : " The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin ;" and again, the redeemed and glorified in heaven sing : " Thou hast redeemed us by thy blood," " They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple." Regeneration therefore must be viewed as a distinct thing from *mere water baptism*. After the Saviour said to Nicodemus, " Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," he instantly added, by way of explanation, " That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is *born of the Spirit* is spirit;" which plainly shews that it was the spiritual birth which our Lord so emphatically insisted upon as being necessary to our admission into the kingdom of heaven.

It is evident to every man who attentively reads the New Testament, that a person may be regenerated, or born again of the Spirit, before he is baptised with water. This was the case with Cornelius, and with the believing Gentiles who listened to the preaching of Peter. The Holy Ghost fell on them, and with new tongues they magnified God : " Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptised, *which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we ?*" Acts x. 46, 47. On



the other hand, a person may assent to the truth, and be baptised, and yet not be born again of the Spirit; which was the case with Simon Magnus. He believed, and was baptised (Acts viii. 13), but he remained in "the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity." Acts viii. 23. It is to be feared that many who are baptised, both in infancy and maturity, are never regenerated, and consequently "cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." Baptismal water—however, and by whomsoever it be consecrated, in whatsoever way it may be administered, or whosoever may perform the ceremony—can never safely be made the ground of reliance for salvation.

When does regeneration take place, if viewed in relation to justification and the pardon of sins? Some theologians speak about it as though it took place antecedently to justification, while others assert that it is a subsequent work. On this subject but little need be said. Any attempt to define the exact relative time, when considered in connection with justification, is a superfluous criticism; as no perceptible period can elapse between our acceptance with God and our regeneration, or between our regeneration and our justification, for the moment our sins are pardoned, we are born again of the Spirit, and adopted into the family of God. Regeneration is therefore an instantaneous work, wrought in the soul by the power of the Holy Ghost the moment we believe with our hearts unto righteousness, and immediately there follows an internal evidence of our acceptance with God, and a personal knowledge of our salvation. Doctor Dwight, in one of his lectures on Regeneration, strongly argues that it is instantaneous, but objects to its perceptibility. He says: "In the Scriptures,

the accounts of this combined subject everywhere teach us that it exists instantaneously. The phraseology by which it is chiefly denoted in the Scriptures, strongly indicates that this is its nature." Again, "The same thing we are taught, in the accounts given in the Scriptures of this fact, as having actually taken place." He then refers to the three thousand Jews who were converted on the day of Pentecost, to Dionysius, Damaris, Sergius Paulus, the jailer, the nobleman of Capernaum, and to the thief on the cross. After which he remarks: "This change, as to the time and manner of its existence, is ordinarily *imperceptible* by him who is the subject of it." And he proceeds to try to prove that those who profess to know when they were regenerated, and to enjoy an internal evidence of it, are entertaining "opinions wholly unscriptural, and of course deceitful and dangerous." He then asserts that "the Scriptures nowhere refer us to the time or manner of our regeneration, and the only evidence we have of it is furnished by the subsequent state of our affections and conduct." "By their fruits ye shall know them. Ye are my disciples, if ye keep my commandments," &c. "These are the rules," says the doctor, "by which, together with others of exactly the same nature, we are directed in the Scriptures to judge of our moral state. But these rules are not only superfluous but useless, if the time, the manner, or the fact of our regeneration were ordinarily known to us?" In answer to the above it may be remarked—

1. That Dr. Dwight confounds the nature of evidence. He seems to have lost all sight of the difference between internal and external evidence. Suppose I know the

time and manner of my regeneration, and am thereby fully satisfied as to my acceptance with God, this does not by any means supersede the necessity of furnishing practical evidence to the church and to the world, by fruits of righteousness, that I am regenerated. I may know it from a personal and an experimental knowledge of the fact, and from the change I have felt in my spiritual nature, but I must demonstrate the same to the world by holy living.

2. As to the notion being anti-scriptural: this he fails to prove; and I think we have ample evidence to the contrary. Dr. Dwight admits, and, in fact, adduces arguments in order to prove, that regeneration is an instantaneous work, and that the change experienced is very great; as expressed in the following figurative language: "Born again, created anew; having a new heart and a right spirit created within us; turning from darkness to light; and from Satan unto God," &c. Now, is it possible to experience so great a change *instantaneously*, and yet be ignorant of it? If the possibility of such a thing be admitted, we have the strongest reason to believe that in ordinary cases it is known and felt; and that those are extraordinary conversions in which the change is not perceived by the persons converted. The manner in which the Saviour illustrates the new birth to Nicodemus clearly proves its perceptibility: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Now what are we to understand by this? Why, when the air is in motion we can sensibly perceive it: we can hear it, and see its effects, though we cannot explain the particular manner of its acting. "So is every one that is born

of the Spirit." The fact is plain: the operation is internally felt, though the particular manner of its operation is incomprehensible. Hence I think Dr. Dwight's opinion on this vital subject is erroneous, anti-scriptural, and dangerous. His definition of regeneration throughout is very defective and unsound, and proves that although he was a man of extensive erudition, his attainments in experimental religion were but limited. I refer to his lecture lxxiv. in particular.

It will be proper to remark, in concluding this part of the subject, that a knowledge of the time of our regeneration, and the enjoyment we felt when the great and glorious change took place, ought not to be made the ground of reliance. The soul must constantly live by faith on Christ. We sometimes hear individuals speak of their conversion to God in such terms as though they solely rested on that for salvation. This is unscriptural, and tremendously dangerous. We must trust in Christ alone for security and eternal safety. Mr. Spurgeon's doctrine of eternal salvation being comprehended in conversion—and which he expresses in the following dogmatical assertion, "You may be saved this moment, and then you will be safe for ever,"—is in direct opposition to the Word of God: "When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby." Ezek. xxxiii. 18.

IV. Regeneration is necessary. This is evident from express declarations of Scripture. Nothing can be more emphatic and explicit than our Lord's declaration to Nicodemus: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." At this emphatic and solemn asseveration the Jewish teacher

marvelled, which caused the Saviour to repeat his assertion, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again."

And a careful investigation of the subject, when viewed in relation to the purity of God, and of heaven, and to the corruption of human nature, will convince every serious, thinking mind, that this great change is essentially necessary. It would be marvellous if man, in his unrenewed and degenerate state, could enter into the kingdom of God. It would be incompatible with the wise arrangements of the Governor of the universe, and the unsullied holiness of the Divine mind. God hates sin. He cannot look upon it with any degree of allowance. Therefore, while man lives in a sinful, unrenewed state, he cannot be reconciled to God. "God is angry with the wicked every day;" and he will never admit the objects of his displeasure into his glorious kingdom. This would disturb the harmony of the celestial inhabitants, and corrupt the purity of their holy residence. Therefore, "without holiness no man can see the Lord." When the devil and his angels sinned, they were banished from the divine presence, and doomed to "suffer the vengeance of eternal fire." And while men continue in sin, they are liable to share the same tremendous fate. Their admission into heaven is not merely doubtful, but absolutely impossible. The justice and holiness of God form an invincible barrier against the admission of either sin or sinners into the heavenly kingdom. It is spoken of as a place of unsullied glory, cloudless light, and perfect holiness: "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall

walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it, and the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. *And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.*" Rev. xxi. 23-27.

The idea of unconverted sinners entering into the kingdom of heaven is *unreasonable*, and inconsistent with the nature of things. There is nothing analogous to it in the natural universe. It is unphilosophical, and incompatible with the arrangements of universal economy, in reference to both the physical and intellectual universe. An unregenerated man has neither taste nor capacity for the pure and refined pleasures of the heavenly world. He is carnal, worldly, sensual, and devilish. He cannot even enjoy the pleasures of religion while he is on earth; the service of God and the society of saints are irksome and repugnant to his feelings; it would therefore be impossible for him to relish the purer joys of that life which is all spiritual and divine. The employment and enjoyment of the glorified to him would be all mystery and confusion. The glories of that bright abode would blind him with excessive light. While the blood-washed millions sing their sublime and joyous song of salvation—"unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sin in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever:" Rev. i. 5; v. 9)—he would stand abashed in stupified silence. Clothed with sin and shame, cut off from all intercourse with holy beings,

doomed to spend an eternity in separation from God and goodness, to ponder over his own guilt in everlasting solitude, he would feel his depravity, when contrasted with the spotless holiness of the sanctified, and the dazzling splendour of their blood-bought crowns, with such intensity as though he were suffering in the very depths of hell. Every creature delights in its own native element, and it would be misery, and in many cases death, to change its element, without a previous and suitable change in its nature. So the unregenerate sinner, who delights in the beggarly elements of this world, has no nature or capacity to enjoy the pleasures of heaven, until he is previously qualified by regeneration. Provision is made in the atonement by Christ to meet this necessary requirement: "Christ loved the Church and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish." Eph. v. 25-28. And the apostle asserts, "We are justified by grace, and thereby made heirs according to the hope of eternal life;" "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the *washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.*" Titus iii. 5-7. We see, therefore, that as God requires that we should be holy, in "his kindness and love," which has appeared in the gift of his Son, and in the atonement made by him, he has provided means whereby we may be renewed, made perfectly holy, and thereby "made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."

# THE BENEFITS OF REDEMPTION.

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## ADOPTION.

**Adoption spoken of in the Scriptures as the grand object of redemption. The nature of Adoption explained. Civil adoption among the Romans, Egyptians, Jews, and other oriental nations ; frequently practised in ancient times. Divine Adoption is a plan of grace, and an unspeakable benefit and honour conferred on man. How it differs from civil adoption. The time of Adoption considered in relation to pardon, justification, and regeneration. The Witness of the Spirit.**

THROUGH the redemption which is by Christ Jesus, we receive the Spirit and the privileges of Adoption. One of the grand objects of our Saviour's humiliation and sufferings was, to "redeem us from under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Hence St. Paul says : " But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Gal. iv. 4, 5. This glorious doctrine of adoption, and the spiritual affinity of believers with the Divine Being, is also explicitly stated by St. Paul to the Romans : " For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear ; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God : and if children, then



heirs ; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." Romans viii. 14—17. Wesley supposes that the inspired apostle, by using both the *Syriac* and *Greek* words jointly ("Abba, Father") "intends to point out the joint cry both of the Jewish and Gentile believers." For God is not the Father of the Jewish believer only, but also of the Gentile. (Romans iv. 16.) For, through Christ, we both have access to the Father by the same Spirit. Hence St. Paul, in his second epistle to the Corinthians, applies the promise (which was originally made to the Jews) to Gentile believers : "I will be to you a Father, and ye shall be my sons and my daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." 2 Cor. vi. 18 ; 1 Chron. xxviii. 6 ; Jer. xxxi. 1-9. And the Saviour himself, when he instructed his disciples to pray, taught them to address the Almighty as their Father : "When thou prayest, say, after this manner, Our Father which art in heaven," &c. It is therefore evident that this spiritual relationship between the Almighty and all true believers is acknowledged by God our heavenly Father.

It may be proper and necessary to say a few words by way of explaining the *legal nature* and the *divine character* of adoption—*legal*, as a civil transaction ; *divine*, as a work of grace. One of the Puritan divines says : "There is a great difference between civil and divine adoption ; inasmuch as civil adoption is an imitation of nature, and was invented for the comfort and satisfaction of those who had no children ; but divine adoption is an act of free grace, contrived for the comfort of such as have no Father." He might have added, or "whose father is the devil."

*Adoption* is a word of *Latin* origin. The practice of adoption was much in use among the ancient Romans; though long before the formation of the Roman nationality, adoption was in use, both among the Egyptians and Jews, and most likely among all the oriental nations. But among the Romans it was properly legalized, and acknowledged in their code of civil laws; and we are informed, by several historians, that in the apostles' time it was a circumstance which frequently occurred. It was principally practiced by wealthy persons who were childless, in order to prevent their estates being divided or descending to strangers. In such cases those who wished to adopt heirs, made choice of such children as were most agreeable to them, and beloved by them; and when they were legally adopted they stood, politically, in the relation of children. On one hand, the children thus adopted were obliged to take the names of their adopters, and pay filial respect to them, as though they were their natural parents; on the other hand, the adopters engaged to treat the adopted children in every respect as though they were their own; and accordingly give them a right to their estates as an inheritance.

From these facts we shall at once perceive the propriety and significancy of the expression, as used by St. Paul, especially when writing to the Romans. We have already alluded to the difference between civil and divine adoption; and we shall do well to bear this in mind. The Almighty was under no obligation to devise the gracious plan of adoption for his own benefit or comfort. He could, throughout all eternity, have been perfectly happy without admitting any of our apostate race into his family.

He had countless myriads of celestial intelligences, "sons of God," to minister unto him, and his own *beloved Son*, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, "by whom also he made the worlds," and "whom he hath appointed heir of all things." (Heb. i. 1, 3.) When men adopt strangers into their families, it is because they discover something in them which they esteem as excellent, something which they admire and love. But man has nothing, either in his moral character or in his nature, which is lovely, and calculated to engage the esteem of the pure and holy God. His actions are vile, and his appearance abominable, "from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot he is full of wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores." Isa. i. 6. (see also Rom. iii. 9-20.)

There is another particular wherein spiritual adoption differs from civil adoption. The political relation established by civil adoption effects no natural or moral change in the individual who is adopted. In the circle of his new relationship he carries with him all the constitutional peculiarities of his moral nature, whether good or bad. The mere act of his adoption cannot change his dispositions or renovate his nature. But, in connection with spiritual adoption, there is a transformation of mind; a putting off of the old man, which is earthly, and a putting on of the new man, which is heavenly: a participation of the divine nature—a spiritual affinity, which assimilates us to the divine image, and unites us to God and Christ by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us, and creates in us a sweet and firm assurance of greater glory, and a higher state of happiness: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that,

when he shall appear we shall be like him ; for we shall see him as he is. And every one that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." 1 John iii. 2, 3. Divine adoption, says Charnock, "is not a mere relation; the privilege and the image of the sons of God go together." A state of adoption is never associated with a state of moral defilement. "Be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you." 2 Cor. vi. 18.

2. In reference to *the time of adoption* there is a difference of opinion. Some theologians urge that it must be before regeneration, because it is supposed that "we must be in the family before we can be made partakers of the blessings of it." But this supposition involves another difficulty. It seems unreasonable to admit that God will receive the degenerate into his family; hence it is extremely difficult to conceive of one taking place without the other. They may be distinguished, as being different in their nature, in the same way as we can distinguish between justification, regeneration, and sanctification; but we cannot separate them. St. John, speaking of the rejection of Christ by the Jews, says: "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." John i. 12. The moment they believed, their sins were pardoned, their souls were regenerated, and they were adopted into God's favour and family. The difference between regeneration and adoption has been thus distinguished: "Regeneration, as a physical act, gives us a likeness to God in our nature; Adoption as a legal act, gives us a right to an inheritance. Regeneration makes us formally his sons, by conveying a

principle (1 Peter i. 12); Adoption makes us relatively his sons, by conveying a power (John i. 12). By the one we are instated in the divine affections; by the other we are partakers of the Divine nature." Buck's Theological Dic. on Adoption.

#### WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT.

*On the evidence of Adoption*, or "The Witness of the Spirit," St. Paul, when writing to the Roman Christians, says: "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." Romans viii. 15, 16. By the Spirit mentioned in this passage the apostle undoubtedly means the Divine Spirit, or the Holy Ghost, who, in a particular manner, dwells in the hearts of all true believers, bearing testimony with their spirits, testifying their adoption and reconciliation with God. For, to bear witness signifies to testify, and furnish evidence of facts or events, and thereby confirming their authenticity.

By the Witness of the Spirit, then, we mean that operation of the Holy Ghost by which he communicates to our spirits an infallible evidence of our adoption into God's family. Wesley says: "The testimony of the Spirit is an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God directly witnesses to my spirit that I am a child of God; that Jesus Christ hath loved me, and given himself for me: and that all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God."

God is the Father of our spirits, and he can commune with them in such a way as we can understand the nature

and design of such communications. By this internal evidence, the believer *knows* that he is passed from death unto life, and that he is delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

This inward witness is not lodged in the passions or imagination, but in the understanding, and is realised by man's rational and intelligent nature. He does not imagine, or merely think, but he *knows* that he is reconciled to God, and adopted into the divine family, by the Spirit that dwelleth in him.

How is this witness obtained? To this important question we answer—

(1.) Not by theological learning, or a critical knowledge of the Christian religion, merely considered as a system or a sacred science. A man may be an adept in theological literature, and not a pious Christian, and consequently destitute of its best and strongest evidence; while an unlearned man may love God, and enjoy the inward evidence and comforts of the Holy Ghost, the love of God shed abroad in his heart.

(2.) It is not produced by a train of arguments, or by any process of dialectical reasoning. Our faith may be strengthened, and our comfort increased, by making a proper use of our reasoning powers; but reason *alone* can never produce in us the witness of the Spirit, if we have it not. "Reason," says Dr. Watts, "is the glory of human nature, and one of the chief eminences whereby we are raised above our fellow-creatures. By the means of many reasonings well connected together, philosophers in our age have drawn a thousand truths out of the depths of darkness." By the application and use of this noble

science we discover our duty to God and our fellow-creatures; by this we arrive at a knowledge of *natural religion*, and learn to confirm our faith in divine revelation. God has revealed himself, both in nature and in grace, in such a way as is suitable to our rational nature and intellectual capabilities. Understanding, judgment, and conscience, are noble powers with which we are blessed; but the exercise of these capabilities, unassisted by divine faith, cannot lead us into the mysteries of the kingdom, unfold to us the nature of supernatural religion, or impart the full assurance of our relationship to God, and a glorious hope of a blessed immortality.

(3.) The Witness of the Spirit, like every other spiritual blessing, is obtained by faith: "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." 1 John v. 10. And the apostle adds: "These things have I written unto you that believe in the name of the Son of God; that ye may *know* that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." As though the apostle had said, The evidence of your adoption and joint-heirship with Christ does not depend on that which is external and deducible, but is so direct and palpable that ye *know* it, by "the Spirit that dwelleth in you."

#### OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

The doctrine of the "Witness of the Spirit," I am aware, is violently opposed, not only by carnal men, from whom we may expect nothing better, (for the carnal mind cannot understand the things of the Spirit,) but even many who profess religion—and men too who are considered eminent theological teachers, and are looked up to as

spiritual guides—oppose this doctrine. An author of a celebrated system of divinity, ridicules the doctrine of the “Witness of the Spirit” as a “false and dangerous fancy,” and tells us “it has deceived many, and ought to be supposed capable of deceiving us,” &c. Much might be said in answer to this statement, but we forbear. Imagination may have deceived many, but neither the Spirit of God, nor the teaching of the Bible, ever deceived one. Those who oppose this doctrine, on the supposition that it is merely the fruit of fancy and religious imagination, by so doing, evidently shew that they themselves are destitute of it, and indirectly brand the sacred writers and the primitive saints with fanaticism and superstition, as did the ancient heathen historians, Tacitus, Pliny, and Suetonius. If the knowledge of sins forgiven, and the witness of the Spirit, had never been taught by the inspired writers, and had never been professed by the first Christians, then their objections would have been of some weight, and our pretensions might justly be regarded as unscriptural and groundless. But the doctrine is not in its infancy. It is clearly and most emphatically taught in the Word of God, and has been believed, and its blessed reality enjoyed, in every age of the Christian Church. In the Word of God we frequently meet with such passages as the following: “Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” Rom. viii. 9. “We know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.” “We know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.” “Know ye not that ye are the temples of the living God.” “He that



keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him; and hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us." 1 John iii. 24. Here the doctrine of the Witness of the Spirit is set forth, or at least evidently implied, in such forms of expression that we cannot, unless wilfully blind, misunderstand their meaning.

But it is contended by some, who admit that such a thing was experienced in the apostles' times, that it was a privilege confined to that age, and consequently cannot be enjoyed in our day. Nothing can be more unreasonable. There is no cause whatever that we should come to a conclusion of this nature. We have the strongest reason to believe that the doctrine is understood and enjoyed by thousands in the present day. However modern Christians may have degenerated, in some respects, from original simplicity, and that high state of spirituality which characterised many of the first Christians, there are many, at the present time, who *know*, by means of the indwelling evidence of the Holy Ghost, that they are the children of God. I refer not to the enraptured and visionary enthusiast, but to men of clear discernment and solid piety, who are generally allowed to be prudent and judicious in their judgment on other subjects. Then why should their testimony to the truth in question be discredited, and regarded as a manifestation of mere enthusiasm. I maintain that the *spiritual* ignorance and inexperience of any man, however learned he may be in science and philosophy, ought not to be urged as an objection against a doctrine which is most clearly and repeatedly taught in the Bible, and enjoyed by many thousands of well-instructed and enlightened Christians. But it may be asked, Whoever does

object to this doctrine on the grounds of the spiritual ignorance and inexperience of others? *Ans.* All who reject it on account of its being incomprehensible to the human mind, considered apart from divine grace, who are not a few, if they reason sincerely. But why should it be thought a thing impossible to enjoy the inward testimony of the Divine Spirit? What theological inconsistency does it involve? Is it considered impossible for God, who “is a Spirit,” to have such access to our minds, *which are spiritual*, as to assure us of his love and mercy—or is it to be regarded as a matter of such little importance that he is not concerned about it? To these questions we reply: We cannot limit the greatness of his power, or restrict the riches of his grace. But we are told, by others who oppose this doctrine, that uncertainty and doubt are necessary to keep believers in a state of continual humility, in order to render them circumspect, and secure their fidelity and continual attention to duty. Will not the full assurance of faith, the witness of the Spirit, and a glorious prospect of heaven, prove more effectual in these respects? Most certainly: “Every one that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure.” Inward purity is the source of fidelity and obedience. Love is the noblest and strongest principle of obedience which can possibly actuate the human mind; and this love is the fruit of the Spirit, which dwells in the heart. Fear and condemnation alienate our affections and check all our energies, but confidence and love produce the contrary effect:—

“ ’Tis love that makes our willing feet  
In swift obedience move.”

It may be well to remark that the Witness of the Spirit is inconsistent with the love and practice of sin. God will not give his Spirit to an evil-doer; and consequently those who profess to enjoy the witness of the Spirit, and at the same time live in sin, are either deceived or deceivers. Light has no fellowship with darkness; and where sin reigns the Spirit cannot dwell. Those, therefore, who enjoy the witness of the Spirit, must be careful to maintain holiness of heart, and a conscience void of offence, or the Holy Spirit will withdraw, and the wicked one will re-enter. If the righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity," but still professeth to hold fast his confidence, he deceiveth himself. He is deluded by the wicked one, who causeth him to believe a lie, to hope well of his state, while he is on the brink of ruin. To pretend to have the witness of the Spirit, without circumspectness of life, and holiness of temper and feeling, is either rank fanaticism or downright hypocrisy.

In conclusion, let me exhort the *sincere and humble Christian*, who may occasionally be in doubt with respect to his acceptance with God, not to be discouraged. This state of mind sometimes rises from a constitutional diffidence, and the many infirmities of our frail nature. There are some "fearful saints," who at times are in doubt for want of this evidence. Such should not be rashly condemned, but comforted and strengthened with God's mercy and precious promises, and earnestly encouraged to trust in God. Even the most illustrious saints may at times be in heaviness through manifold temptations: "Weeping may

endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. Hope thou in God, for thou shalt yet praise Him." We have now considered the beneficial results of redemption, so far as they relate to pardon, justification, regeneration, and adoption. The doctrine of Imputed Righteousness, Sanctification, and Final Perseverance, will now be treated on. The peculiar relation in which imputed righteousness stands to justification seems to suggest the propriety of it being discussed in connection therewith. This has been partially done, but it is thought advisable, under many considerations, to have a distinct and separate dissertation on the subject.

## XXV. IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS.

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**Imputed righteousness, in relation to the elect. Reference to Watson's Institutes. The Antinomian notion. Dr. Crisp. John Agricola. Finney's Stricture. Calvin's Institutes. Armenius. Wealey's opinion. R. Baxter. Passages of Scripture relative to this doctrine. The opinions and arguments of Matthew Henry and Bishop Beveridge examined and found unsound. The true Scriptural doctrine of Imputed Righteousness.**

**IMPUTED** Righteousness, when viewed as importing an idea of the imputation of Christ's active and passive righteousness to the elect, so as to constitute them positively and actually righteous, has been a subject of endless controversy : strongly advocated by a certain class of Calvinistic divines, and strenuously opposed by the advocates of *sound scriptural theology*. We shall not trouble the reader with a digest of the multifarious arguments which have been adduced for and against this controverted doctrine. Those who wish to be gratified in this respect may consult Mr. Watson's Institutes, (vol. ii. page 416, &c.), where the subject is rather extensively discussed. Our object, in the first place, will be to ascertain whether Christ's righteousness is so imputed to believers as to constitute their righteousness or justification; and if so, in what particular sense it may so be considered. It has been remarked by a living author, that "even Calvin himself has said nothing on this subject but what Arminius, in his declaration before the States of Holland, declares his readiness to sub-

scribe to." And it is well known that Mr. Wesley entertained much the same views on this subject as Arminius. Both of them admit the doctrine of imputed righteousness to be scriptural, provided it be soberly interpreted. It therefore appears, that both Calvinists and Arminians agree that the imputation of the righteousness of Christ is a doctrine taught in the Word of God; but as to the import of that expression, or what is really meant by the phrase, "*imputed righteousness*," many of them differ very widely. Let us briefly consider some of their peculiar notions:—

1. What is called the Antinomian notion of Christ's imputed righteousness, as advocated by the notorious Dr. Crisp, and others of the same school, is one of the distinguishing characteristics of that system of theological libertinism set on foot by John Agricola in the year 1538. This corrupt theory of imputed righteousness represents the elect as being eternally justified, and consequently they cannot do anything displeasing to God. The fundamental reason they assign for this is, that Christ's passive obedience and practical righteousness are transferred to the elect, and that the sins of the elect are transferred to Christ; and consequently Christ is the sinner, and the elect are righteous. According to this view of the subject the elect are legally righteous; in other words, their righteousness is of works and not of faith. It would be superfluous, and a misapplication of time, to attempt to prove that this licentious doctrine is unscriptural, repugnant to reason and every refined feeling of our moral nature. "The notion is monstrous, and if fairly unmasked and fully exposed, would appear blasphemous." The idea of our blessed Saviour being regarded as a filthy and polluted sinner, and that the

most guilty of our race are holy, because they are eternally elected, is an outrage to every feeling and sentiment of pure religion, and is totally without foundation in the Word of God. Watson exposes this impious notion of imputed righteousness in a very able manner. (Theo. Ins. vol. ii. 417, &c.) Finney, in his "Systematic Theology," page 563, says, "The doctrine of a *literal imputation* of Adam's sin to all his posterity, of the *literal imputation* of all the sins of the elect to Christ, and his suffering for them the exact amount to their transgressions; of the *literal imputation* of Christ's righteousness or obedience to the elect, and the consequent perpetual justification of all that are converted, from the first exercise of faith, whatever their subsequent life may be; I say, I regard this dogma as fabulous, and better befitting a romance than a system of theology." We might also add, that Abraham Scott, in his controversial writings, shews the monstrous absurdity of this Antinomian dogma in a very easy and pointed manner. His arguments are worth a careful examination.

2. Another and more moderate opinion, respecting imputed righteousness, is that which is held by the generality of Calvinistic divines, and taught in the various theological lectures, sermons, and systems of divinity. Calvin's Institutes contain the following passages, and the sentiments embodied therein are substantially adopted by his followers: "We simply explain justification to be an acceptance, by which God receives us into his favour, and esteems us as righteous persons; and we say it consists in the remission of sins, and the imputation of the righteousness of Christ." "He must certainly be destitute of a righteousness of his own, who is taught to seek it out of

himself. This is most clearly asserted by the apostle when he says, 'He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' We see that our righteousness is not in ourselves, but in Christ: 'As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.' What is placing our righteousness in the obedience of Christ, but asserting that we are accounted righteous only because his obedience is accepted for us as if it were our own?" Arminius does not differ very widely from Calvin on this subject. Hence he says, "I believe that sinners are accounted righteous solely by the obedience of Christ; and that the righteousness of Christ is the only meritorious cause on account of which God pardons the sins of believers, and reckons them as righteous, as if they had perfectly fulfilled the law. But since God imputes the righteousness of Christ to none except believers, I conclude that, in this sense, it may be well and properly said, to a man who believes, faith is imputed for righteousness, through grace, because 'God hath set forth his Son Jesus Christ to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.'"

He also asserts, in connection with the above, that his opinion does not differ so widely from Calvin's as to prevent him from subscribing to those things which he has delivered on this subject in the third book of Institutes. (The works of Arminius, compiled by Nichols, vol. i. page 636.) Mr. Wesley, in his sermon on "The Lord our Righteousness," uses nearly the same language as Arminius, and many Arminian and Wesleyan writers have expressed themselves in a similar manner; but still, in their minute interpretations of the phrase, "imputed righteousness,"



they do not exactly agree. The following quotation from Mr. Wesley's sermon on the subject, may be regarded as embodying the general opinion entertained by the various Methodist bodies, relative to the "imputed righteousness of Christ;" there may be some trifling difference, but in the main points they agree: "As the active and passive righteousness of Christ were never in fact *separated* from each other, so we never need separate them at all. It is with regard to both these conjointly that Jesus is called 'The Lord our Righteousness.' But when is this righteousness imputed? When they believe. In that very hour the righteousness of Christ is theirs. It is imputed to every one that believes, as soon as he believes." "But in what sense is this righteousness imputed to believers? In this: all believers are forgiven and accepted, not for the sake of anything in them, or of anything that ever was, that is, or ever can be done by them, but wholly and solely for the sake of what Christ hath done and suffered for them," &c. With Calvin and his followers the notion of imputed righteousness appears to be, that the entire obedience of Christ, comprehending both his doings and sufferings, is accounted to believers as though they had rendered to God entire obedience, or as though what Christ did was in some way transferred to their account. Baxter says, "Christ's righteousness is imputed in the sense of its being accounted of God the valuable consideration, satisfaction, and merit, for which we are, when we consent to the covenant of grace, forgiven and justified, against the condemning sentence of the law of innocency, and accounted and accepted of God to grace and glory." In this account of man's salvation Mr. Baxter is not sufficiently clear and explicit. He seems to

ignore the cross or death of Christ. The apostle says, "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission." If by the righteousness of Christ Mr. Baxter means his sufferings and death, as well as his active obedience, it would have been much better, when particularising, to have stated it.

Mr. Hervey, who was a strong advocate for the high Calvinistic notion of imputed righteousness, says : "Whoever rejects the doctrine of the imputed righteousness of Christ to man, does, by so doing, reject the imputation of man's sins to the Saviour." And he seems to consider this an unanswerable argument in favour of the doctrine of the entire righteousness of Christ being imputed to believers. In reply we might remark—

1. The sins of man are never so imputed to Christ as to constitute him a sinner ; for "he was without sin." He never did sin, nor was he ever constituted, on any account, *a sinner*. It is said, "He was made sin for us ;" but this evidently means he was made a sacrifice or *sin-offering* for us. Luther spoke unguardedly when he designated Christ "the greatest sinner in the world." Such an expression cannot be justified by any portion of Scripture.

2. If our sins were so imputed to Christ as to constitute him a sinner, he could not have redeemed us. God required a holy sacrifice, without spot and blameless, to atone for the sins of man.

3. If the imputation of Christ's righteousness is so attributed to man as to take away his sins, and if the imputation of man's sins to Christ is analogous thereto, which Mr. Hervey seems to think is the case, this double imputation, so far from supporting his dogma, would

nullify itself. Hence Mr. Hervey's argument falls to the ground.

Bishop Beveridge, in support of Mr. Hervey's views, says : " The Son of God, being in every respect equal to the Father, was in no sort bound to do more than the Father himself did; and whatever the Son did, which the Father did not do, may justly be counted as a work of supererogation, which, without any violation of justice, might be set down to the account of some other person." What a miserable argument is this for a learned man. A doctrine which requires such reasoning as this to support it must be false. In reply we might remark—

1. The Son of God is equal to the Father in reference to his divine nature only ; his humanity was not equal to the Father. In relation to this, he was made of a woman, made under the law, and consequently was made under moral obligation to fulfil its requirements. His actual observance of the law, as a man, was necessary ; offence in one point would have been sin.

2. If the righteousness of Christ is perfect, and this is imputed to believers, they, of course, become perfectly righteous, without obeying the law ; and if they perform any acts of obedience, such acts must be supererogatory ; and consequently those who subscribe to the Bishop's notions have an idea that obedient believers have a supererogatory fund, and one should suppose vastly richer than the spiritual treasures which are at the disposal of the Roman pontiff, and consequently are in circumstances which would enable them to distribute indulgences. Hence follows the Antinomian notion of indulgences. " The elect may commit any kind of sin without in the

least affecting their eternal state." "The elect cannot do anything displeasing to God." "Believers have nothing to do with the law of God." "God is not angry with *his people* for their sins, nor in any sense punishes them for them." "All is nullified by the imputed righteousness of Christ." Such theology, whoever are its advocates, is infamous, and a scandal to human nature. Well may Finney say, "It is more befitting a romance than a system of Christian theology."

The passages of Scripture which are supposed to contain the doctrine of imputed righteousness, as above described, are but very few; and, in reference to their precise signification, are of somewhat dubious import: "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God *imputeth righteousness* without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." Romans iv. 3-8. The same apostle, in his letter to the Philippians, says, "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Phil. iii. 8, 9. In his second epistle to the Corin-

thians he says, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. For He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." 2 Cor. v. 19, 21. The prophet Jeremiah also uses the phrase, "The Lord our Righteousness," and Christ is said to be made unto believers, "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." These are the principal passages from which the Calvinistic theologians draw their arguments in favour of the doctrine of *imputed righteousness*. They profess that it is clearly shewn in these passages that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to believers, and may be defined thus: "It is God's gracious donation of the righteousness of Christ to believers, and His acceptance of their person as righteous on the account thereof. Their sins being imputed to him, and his obedience being imputed to them, they are by virtue thereof acquitted from guilt, and accepted as righteous before God." ("Buck's Theological Dictionary," under the word "*imputation*.")

But the passages above quoted may be understood in another sense, namely, as implying the imputation of faith: "*His faith* is counted to him for righteousness"—"The righteousness of God which is by faith." But, comparing Scripture with Scripture, and being guided by the analogy of faith, or the general teachings of the sacred writings, the meaning of the above passages, and several others of similar import, seems to be this: When a man's sins are forgiven him, and he is brought into a state of justification by faith in Christ, in which state God imputes unto him

Christian system. The same spirit, in a measure, is communicated to every individual Christian in our day. For, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Romans viii. 9. Hence, by this Spirit all true believers are enlightened, quickened, regenerated, sanctified, and comforted—have the knowledge of their adoption, the earnest of their inheritance, and are sealed unto the day of redemption. Eph. i. 17, 18; John iii. 5; 2 Thess. ii. 13; 1 Peter i. 2; Rom. v. 5; viii. 15, 16; Gal. iv. 6; Eph. iv. 30.

3. Christ ascended into heaven, and took his seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high, that he might officiate as High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary; and in that capacity consummate the work of atonement, by either virtually or actually pleading the infinite efficacy of his blood on behalf of sinners for whom he died. On this interesting subject many able works have been written, and thousands of sermons preached. It would therefore be superfluous, and incompatible with the design of this work, to enlarge upon it. But, as it forms an essential part of the Christian system, we cannot with any consistency, pass over it without making a few remarks illustrative of what appears to be comprehended in that which is termed "The Priesthood of Christ."

1. Christ, in order to become the High Priest of his Church, in the proper sense of the expression, must ascend into the "holy place made without hands." We are expressly told, that "if he were on earth, he should not be a priest;" that is, he could not complete the service answerable to his appointment as High Priest; and the reason is given by the apostle in the following words:

“ Seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law : who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things,” (Heb. viii. 4, 5) ; that is, the temple, with all pertaining thereto, where the high priest performs the superior service, is the pattern of things in heaven. (See Heb. ix. 2, 23.) Under the Mosaic economy, the law appointed but one earthly priesthood, and it was restricted entirely to the tribe of Levi and the order of Aaron (Exodus xl. 15; Numbers xvi. 40). And as Christ was not of Aaronic descent, but sprang from the tribe of Judah, he had no appointment to the service of the earthly sanctuary, and so could not be an high priest on earth. He suffered on earth as a sacrifice for sin ; but the mere slaying of the sacrifice did not complete the atonement, even under the law. Before the work was completed, the blood of the sacrifice (or a portion of it) was brought within the vail, into the holiest of all, and there sprinkled upon the mercy-seat, after the offering of the incense. This was a service peculiar to the high priest. (Leviticus xvi. 15.) Now, Jesus could not thus officiate upon earth, there being no holy place appointed for him, in which he might offer his gift and sacrifice, after the manner of the high priest under the law. But, nevertheless, the Son of God is an High Priest, consecrated by the word of the oath for ever. (Heb. vii. 28.) And the apostle, discussing Christ’s unchanging priesthood, says : “ Now, of the things which we have spoken, this is the sum : We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.” Heb. viii. 1. And in chapter ix. 11, 12, he says : “ But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater

and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands ; that is to say, not of this building ; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." From these significant declarations relative to the priesthood of Christ, we learn that his ascension into heaven corresponds with the entry of the high priest into the most holy place on the great day of atonement. Hence the apostle says : " For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true ; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." Heb. ix. 24. And in this exalted state he is declared to be " a priest for ever, . . . . after the power of an endless life . . . . He ever liveth to make intercession for us."

2. As to the *manner* of his intercession, it is a subject which we cannot fully understand, therefore it becometh us to speak cautiously. A reference to the manner in which the Jewish high priest interceded on the day of atonement, may in some measure serve to illustrate the manner of our Saviour's intercession in the presence of God for us ; as the former was typical of the latter. And from various representations relative to the mediatorial transactions of Christ, we are authorised to conclude, that as a priest his manner of intercession is real ; but whether actual and vocal, or only virtual, we cannot safely say. It is a fact worthy of our notice, that St. Paul illustrates the intercession by referring to the appearance of the high priest among the Jews, in the presence of God, on the day of atonement, with this difference : The Jewish priests



entered into the *holy place* "by the blood of goats and calves," but Christ by his own blood—

" *His* blood atoned for all our race,  
And sprinkles now the throne of grace."

Wesley seems to think that his appearance in the presence of God for us, consists in exhibiting the body which was nailed to the cross, and that will be a sufficient intercession without his vocal pleading :

" Five bleeding wounds he bears,  
Received on Calvary ;  
*They* pour effectual prayers,  
*They* strongly speak for me."

Most assuredly, his blood is infinitely efficacious, without his vocal pleading.

In contemplating Christ as an intercessor with the Father, we are not to suppose him supplicating an angry judge, and pleading to appease the wrath of a legal prosecutor ; for peace is made by the " blood of the cross." Neither are we to regard him as litigating a point of law or equity in a court of judicature. But he intercedes by shewing himself as man's surety, and as having met all the requirements of divine justice, by offering himself as a sacrifice for sin : " He who knew no sin, was made sin (or a sin offering) for us." &c. We should further bear in mind, that Christ does not intercede with the Father to remind him of anything which he otherwise might forget, nor to persuade him to anything which he is not disposed to do ; but his presentation of himself there may serve to illustrate the holiness and majesty of the Father, and the

wisdom and grace of the Son. It may be regarded as a perpetuation of the great sacrifice offered up for the sin of the world, and as a ceaseless continuation of the great day of atonement. (It may also serve other purposes, unknown to us, in relation to the inhabitants of the invisible world, and the complete economy under which they are placed.) Under the old dispensation, in connection with the Jewish ecclesiastic economy, the sacrifices were repeated; but under the gospel dispensation, the repetition of sacrifices is done away. There now needs "no more sacrifice for sin," because the great *Sacrifice* is ever before God, presented to the Father in the intercession of his Son.

It is also through the intercession of Christ that the prayers of the saints, and the sacrifice of thanksgiving to God, are offered in an acceptable manner. The Supreme Being cannot be approached through any other medium; hence the apostle says: "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually; that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks unto his name." Heb. xiii. 15. And St. Peter speaks to the same effect: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God *by Jesus Christ*." 1 Peter ii. 5.

We may also add, that Christ is our *sole* advocate or mediator: "There is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6. On this subject Mr. Wesley makes the following judicious remarks: "One (Mediator) to reconcile man to God, and to transact the whole affairs of our salvation. This excludes all other mediators, as saints and angels, whom the Papists

set up and idolatrously worship as such ; just as the heathens of old set up many mediators, to pacify their superior gods : therefore all men are to apply to this Mediator *who gave himself for all.*"

3. In the proper signification of the word *priest*, Christ only sustains the priestly office ; hence, in the Christian Church, there can be no such officer as *priest*. Papists, *partially reformed Churches*, and Mormonites, have constituted a priesthood in connection with their respective systems ; but their pretensions are groundless, and their arguments on this subject false and anti-scriptural. Their notions of a merely human priesthood may all be traced to ignorance, pride, and superstition. "A priest denotes a person commissioned by divine authority to offer up a real sacrifice to God." If this be the correct meaning of the word, we may venture to assert, that there is no such officer either within the pale of Popery, or associated with the lewd communities of Mormonism. Under the gospel dispensation, there can be *one priest only*, namely Christ, who offered the *one* sacrifice (namely his own body) upon the cross. The councils of the Romish Church, among other wicked inventions and God-insulting abominations, have constituted a priesthood ; and the deluded votaries of that anti-christian system erroneously believe, or impiously pretend to believe, that their priests (many of whom are notoriously ungodly men) are empowered to offer up to the Divine Majesty, a *real and proper sacrifice*, as were the consecrated priests of the Jewish hierarchy under the Old Testament. As to the notions entertained by the raving disciples of Mormonism, in reference to *their* priesthood, they are so contradictory and incompatible

with all rational and enlightened ideas, and so repugnant and insulting to common sense, as to be totally unworthy of confutation, or even a stricture. The man who has no more regard for his intellectual, moral, and religious character, than to be deluded with the idea of the *Mormonic priesthood*, is an object of either sheer pity or utter contempt.

In regard to the origin of a Christian priesthood amongst men, it may be worthy of notice, that ecclesiastical history informs us, that in the second century, a short time subsequent to the reign of the emperor Adrian, “when the Jews by the second destruction of Jerusalem were bereaved of all hopes of the restoration of their government to its former grandeur, the notion that the ministers of Christianity succeeded to the character and prerogatives of the Jewish priesthood, was industriously propagated by the Christian doctors; and that, in consequence, the bishops claimed a rank and character similar to that of the Jewish high priest; the presbyters, to that of the priests; and the deacons, to that of the Levites. One of the pernicious effects of this groundless comparison and pretension, seems to have been the introduction of the idea of a real sacrifice in the Christian Church, and of sacrificing priests.” In the Established Church of England there is a class of the clergy denominated priests—namely, those who attain to the second order in her hierarchy. On the nature and character of their office, many different opinions are entertained, according to the peculiar notions of her clergy in reference to “the Lord’s Supper.” The Puseyitical party, (and some few other divines of great learning, who will not acknowledge themselves the disciples of Doctor Pusey,) seem

to regard the Lord's Supper as an *eucharistical sacrifice*. These, of course, consider all who are authorised to administer the sacrament *priests*, in the strictest sense of the word. Others hold the Lord's Supper to be a feast of commemoration of the *one sacrifice*, once offered on the cross ; “ while others maintain, with the Church of Scotland, that it is a rite of no other moral import than the mere commemoration of the death of Christ.” It is evident from the *Word of God*, whatever doctors, and councils, and synods may say, that Christ offered up himself as the last sacrifice for sin, and having entered into the holy place made without hands, by the shedding and sprinkling of his own blood, he has become our High Priest, and he is the *only* intercessor between God and man.

## XIX. CHRIST IS KING, AS WELL AS PRIEST.

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CHRIST'S kingdom was typified by the Jewish theocracy. His Proclamation. His Coronation, and ascent to the "Holy Hill." Christ's kingdom is by legal investiture: universal over heaven, and earth, and hell: a kingdom of power. His enemies must submit to his supreme authority. The Millenium. Will Christ reign personally? The opinions of Bishop Hall, Bishop Newton, Dr. Chalmers, and others. Hasty conclusion on this subject to be avoided.

As an evidence that Christ has completed the work of redemption, he has taken possession of his throne and kingdom, which were promised under the Old Testament, and typified by the Jewish theocracy. In heaven he reigns as Lord and King of the universal Church. In the days of his flesh this kingdom was proclaimed as being nigh at hand; but he did not actually take possession of it until he ascended far above all heavens, and sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. It was then that God "anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows," and "crowned him with glory and honour." Then was fulfilled the august prediction of the Psalmist: "I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." "Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool."

This kingdom belonged to Christ by legal investiture,

and to this purpose are the numerous Scriptures which assert that God hath loved Christ, hath appointed him over his house, and hath put all things into his hands. He is therefore the legal head of all principalities and powers, thrones and dominions. It was in consequence, and as the reward, of his voluntary humiliation and obedience unto death, that God thus highly exalted him, and vested him with supreme dominion over all things in heaven, and in earth, and under the earth, and bestowed upon him the highest glory and blessedness. Hence we find his royal enthronement and happiness are essentially connected: "Thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness; thou settest a crown of pure gold upon his head. His glory is great in thy salvation: honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him. For thou hast made him most blessed for ever: thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance." Psalm xxi. 3, 5, 6. "In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth," &c. Psalm lxxii. 7—12.

Christ must reign as King until all his enemies are put under his feet; that is to say, until they are completely subjugated or destroyed: "They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him." Psal. lxxii. 9, 11. For thus saith the Father to the Son: "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. Rule thou in the midst of

thine enemies ; the Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. He shall judge among the heathen ; he shall fill the places with the dead bodies ; he shall wound the heads over many countries." Psal cx. 1-6. The kingly power of Christ will be manifested over all by the destruction of either sin or the sinner. "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Psal. ii. 9. The hearts which now yield to the impressions of his Spirit, are broken, to be formed anew into vessels of honour, fitted for the Master's use, while those who continue stubborn and hardened, must be dashed in pieces by the blow of his eternal vengeance.

The enemies of Christ are twofold, namely, *temporal* and *spiritual*. Among his temporal enemies were the Jews, who rejected him, crucified him, and persecuted his disciples. But the vial of his wrath was poured out upon them. Their temple was demolished, their battlements were levelled with the ground, and those who escaped the edge of the sword were driven into exile, to groan under slavery till death relieved them of their sorrows ; thus, were they "dashed in pieces like a potter's vessel."

The Romans were the enemies of Christ, but the conquerors of Jerusalem were in their turn smitten by the rod of Christ's strength. Nero, Domitian, Dioclesian, and all the rest of those merciless persecutors, were weighed in the balances, and found wanting. Pagan Rome, "the throne on the seven hills," has fallen ; her idols have been crushed, and the whole Roman Empire has been seen marching in humble subjugation beneath the banner of the crucified Redeemer.



The kings and rulers of imperial Rome, and its numerous provinces, took counsel together to destroy the kingdom of Christ, and to crush the rising power and glory of Christianity. The heathens burnt with rage against the apostles, as men worthy of no other treatment than disgrace, imprisonment, and death. But what was the final result? Why, every effort tended only to enlarge the way for the victorious Redeemer. In the midst of darkness and error, bloody persecution and death, the truth of Christ shone forth with irresistible power and glory. In vain did worldly eloquence and political influence become the allies of superstition and prejudice. Sustained by the arm of the Almighty, and constrained by the love of Christ, the heralds of the cross pursued their progress from city to city, and from province to province: "The foolish things of this world," the unlearned and despised Galileans, were chosen by God to confound the wise; and mighty kings and proud philosophers were humbled in the dust before the power of divine truth, and the terrible majesty of the invisible King: "They shall make war with the Lamb, but the Lamb shall overcome them." "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. He spake unto them in his wrath, and vexed them in his sore displeasure," &c. In defiance of their malice and rage, he maintained his lofty position, and sat as King upon his holy hill of Zion. He spake in his wrath to the Jews, who rejected him, and said, "We will not have this man to reign over us." He smote them by the sword of Titus, and overthrew their once glorious city in blazing ruins. In wrath God spoke to the opposing Roman emperors; he vexed and destroyed all their contending

factions, until that very cross, which had been esteemed the symbol of degradation, was assumed by Constantine the Great as the brightest ornament of the imperial throne; and in the government of that illustrious monarch, Christ reigned over the once Pagan empire. What Christ has done to those anti-christian powers of old, he will do to his present enemies, either before or at his second coming. For he must reign universally over all power, authority, and dominion, whether in heaven, on earth, or in hell.

“Jesus, the name high over all,  
In hell, or earth, or sky;  
Angels and men before it fall,  
And devils fear and fly.”

“The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” All the former trophies of the king of terrors will be absorbed in the final victory of a mightier King, at whose imperial command the trumpet shall sound, the sepulchres will be unlocked, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible. He hath the keys also of hell, or the invisible world of spirits, as well as of death, and at his authoritative bidding, both death and *hell* must give up their prisoners. And then will be brought to pass the word of the apostle: “Death is swallowed up in victory!” And then will be fully and finally accomplished the great work of human redemption: “As in Adam all died, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”

But, by the kingdom and reign of Christ, we sometimes understand the empire of grace, and particularly in reference to that period when Christ shall universally and graciously reign amongst mankind. On this subject it may

be proper and necessary to offer a few observations. Scarcely any subject of a prophetic character has given rise to so much controversy amongst the learned, as that which relates to what is termed "*the millenium*," or the reign of Christ on earth for "*a thousand years*." The particular point controverted by theologians is, whether or not the reign of Christ will be personal. Whichever view we adopt, the difficulties in reconciling Scripture with itself appear considerable. Several pious and eminently learned divines have espoused the affirmative of the question, and have strongly maintained that the Saviour will reign personally; but the general and prevailing opinion of the Christian Church has been, that he will reign universally and triumphantly in the powerful operations of his grace, which may be preceded by some mighty displays of his sovereign power, in the salvation of the penitent, and in the destruction of the rebellious and incorrigible.

Who then shall decide the question, and pronounce which interpretation is true? Bishop Hall has made some very sensible remarks on this subject. He says: "Where to fix the beginning of the millenium, and where the end, and what manner of reign it shall be, whether temporal or spiritual, on earth or in heaven, undergoes as many constructions as there are pens that have undertaken it." "It is indeed a mystery which shall not be completely unravelled till the day shall declare it." "At the end the vision shall speak; but till then the words are closed up and sealed." Bishop Newton also wisely remarks: "Prudence, as well as modesty, requires that we should forbear all curious inquiries into the nature and condition of this future kingdom, as how Satan shall be bound for a thousand years, and

afterwards be loosed again; how the raised saints shall unite and associate with the living, and judge and govern the world; how Christ shall manifest himself to them, and reign among them; how the New Jerusalem, the city and Church of God, shall descend from heaven to earth; how Satan shall at last deceive the nations, and what nations they shall be, &c.—these are points (says the learned Bishop) which the Holy Spirit hath not thought fit to explain; and folly may easily ask more questions than wisdom can answer.” Many of the controverted points connected with our Lord’s second coming, are embarrassed with difficulties on both sides, sufficient to prevent wise and humble men from dogmatizing on either side of the question, and to excite mutual respect and forbearance. The event is certainly a doctrine of faith, absolutely predicted and explicitly stated in the Word of God; but the time and circumstantials being imperfectly revealed, are subjects of forbearance. These sentiments are expressed by the learned and pious Dr. Chalmers, who also says: “None but the rash and self-conceited will be dogmatically confident on a subject on which the ablest divines, both in ancient and modern times, have expressed themselves with the greatest caution.” It is lamentable to find what extravagances and absurdities some men, who have adopted the view of Christ’s personal reign, have fallen into. Many who have written on this subject have been guided by the dictates of wild, unbridled fancy, which have led them to fix the exact period of Christ’s second advent, the particular place where he will fix the seat of his government, (Jerusalem, America, &c.,) the peculiar characteristics of the polity of his kingdom, and some have even gone so

far as to say who shall sustain office under his personal government. I have observed, that in many instances they take up some figurative passage of Scripture, which they fancy sets forth the personal reign of Christ; they next form an hypothesis, and substitute it for a theory, which they, by a process of reasoning, change into an axiom, and then dogmatically assert and declare the thing is most palpable and evident beyond all doubt. Such individuals would do well carefully to study the writings of Mede, Chandler, Newton, Hall, Horsley, Bickersteth, and Burton, on this subject. The following works may be also read to advantage: Hopkins on the Millenium; Whitby's Treatise, at the end of vol. ii. of his Annotations on the New Testament; R. Gray's Discourses, dis. 10; Bellamy's Treat. on the Proph.; Shrubsole's Theol. Misc., vol. vi.; and Lardner's Cred. After carefully examining those passages of Scripture, on which the Millenarians lay the greatest stress, in support of their peculiar notions, I am inclined to think that the reign of Christ, during the millenium, will be spiritual; and the language relative to the resurrection of the saints, &c., is only figurative, and refers to the conversion of the Jews, and the diffusion of genuine Christianity through all nations, and among all people. This will be a glorious state; may we ever labour to bring about its accomplishment.

We have shewn, in the preceding essays, that Christ, by his humiliation and incarnation, by his sufferings and death, by his resurrection and ascension, by his intercession and regal authority, and by his power over death and hell, has become our great deliverer and Saviour. We shall next consider the extent of the atonement.

incorrect, and an unwarrantable assertion. Many eminent men, not at all inferior to Dr. Smith in theological attainments, have maintained the *moral* possibility of living a holy life *for more than one hour*. Wesley and Fletcher, though perhaps not equal to Dr. Smith in some branches of modern science and philosophical literature, were, we think, his superiors in the sacred science of experimental theology and a knowledge of the deep things of God. Dr. A. Clarke was not a *grossly ignorant man*. We think he may be ranked with the professor of Homerton College, either as a scholar or as a theologian. On this subject he remarks, that they who insinuate the impossibility of observing the moral law of God, and that *every man since the fall does daily break them in thought, word, and deed*, "bear false witness against God and his truth." He then asks, "Do they not greatly err, not knowing the Scripture, which teaches the necessity of such obedience, nor the power of God, by which the evil principle of the heart is destroyed, and the law of purity written on the soul? If even the *regenerate* man, as some have unwarily asserted, does daily break these commands in thought, word, and deed, he may be as bad as Satan for aught we know; for Satan himself cannot transgress in more forms than these, for sin can be committed in no other way, either by bodied or disembodied spirits, than by thought, or word, or deed. Such sayings as these tend to destroy the distinction between good and evil, and leave the infidel and the believer on a par as to their moral state." (Exodus xx. Note 6, in fine.) St. Paul was not *grossly ignorant*, and he certainly believed in the possibility of being "sanctified wholly, throughout body, soul, and spirit," and being "*preserved blameless unto the coming of Christ.*"

Therefore, to say the least, it is speaking very unguardedly to attribute the notion of entire and continued holiness to "gross ignorance," or to "a delusion, by a loose and ambiguous use of words." Many rash expressions have been uttered on the other side of the question, which do not speak well for the state of mind in reference to those who have thus improperly defended sinless perfection. We should learn to think soberly and to speak cautiously: "Let your moderation be known unto all men."

## XXVII. ON FINAL PERSEVERANCE.

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**The Calvinistic view of Final Perseverance. Arguments in favour of the Calvinistic notion. Perfections of Deity. Sovereign Election. Election according to the Divine foreknowledge. Intrinsic efficacy of Redemption. The work of the Spirit. Various passages of Scripture examined which seem to contain the doctrine of Final Perseverance. The possibility of finally falling, argued from the threatenings of Scripture, &c.: from Hebrews vi. 3-5, and other passages. Final apostacy proved from sacred biography. Solomon, once in a state of grace—his apostacy—no account of his restoration. Judas, once in grace—his fall—his final apostacy. Various cases of finally falling from grace. The apostatising Jews a warning.**

THE doctrine of final preservation has long been a subject of theological controversy between Calvinistic and Arminian divines. The Calvinists, generally, maintain that when a man is truly regenerated, and brought into a state of saving grace, he cannot finally fall, so as to be eternally lost. They profess to prove this—

First, From the perfections of God. Secondly, From the nature of sovereign and unconditional election, which, they argue, the Scriptures set forth. Thirdly, From the intrinsic value of the atonement, or efficacy of redemption. Fourthly, From the nature of the work of the Holy Spirit; and, Fifthly, From certain passages of Scripture, in which they suppose this doctrine is contained or set forth.

1. They argue that the doctrine of final perseverance, or final preservation, is deducible from the perfections of God; on which subject they reason thus: “God, as a Being



possessing infinite love, faithfulness, power, and wisdom, can hardly be supposed to suffer any of his people to fall into perdition. This would be a reflection on his attributes. and argue that he is worse than a common father to his family." *Answer* : If this method of reasoning were sound and correct, we might say, we can hardly suppose that God would have suffered our first parents to have been ruined by the devil while in the garden of Paradise; but if we admit that he did, it is a reflection on his "love, faithfulness, power, and wisdom." In fact, this mode of reasoning would ultimately lead us to conclude, that it would not be right to suppose that God, who is infinitely powerful, wise, and benevolent, would allow moral evil to exist, or even to have originated; for an intelligent and benevolent father will ever guard the interests of his family according to the best of his ability. But every enlightened and well informed mind will see that such comparisons will not hold good, in relation to God's scheme of moral government. God has evidently constituted man a moral agent, able by divine grace to stand, but free to fall. This was the case with Adam when in his primal state; and this is the case with God's people at the present day, under the gospel dispensation, or why so many exhortations to faithfulness and duty?

2. Final preservation is argued from God's sovereign election. But if there be no such arrangement in the divine government as sovereign and unconditional election to eternal life, this argument must, like the former, fall to the ground. Perhaps the strongest passage in the Bible, which *seems* to favour the doctrine of sovereign and unconditional election to eternal life, is in St. Paul's epistle to

the Ephesians, where it is recorded that God the Father “hath chosen us in him (Christ) before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.” Ephesians i. 4-6. But, by comparing Scripture with Scripture, we shall find that this predestination to adoption does not rest on the divine sovereignty, irrespective of our faith and obedience; but that the Almighty, in electing to the adoption of sons, determined, according to the good pleasure of his will, to choose those whom he foreknew would comply with his divine requirements, according to the purposes of his grace. Hence St. Peter says, when addressing Christians in general: “Elect, according to the *foreknowledge of God the Father*, through sanctification of the Spirit, *unto obedience*,” &c. As Mr. Wesley very correctly remarks, on this passage: “Election, in the Scripture sense, is God’s doing anything that our merit or power have no part in; the true predestination or fore-appointment of God is: (1.) He that believeth shall be saved from the guilt and power of sin. (2.) He that endureth to the end shall be saved eternally.” “Through every part of this appointment of God, promise and duty go hand in hand. All is free gift; and yet such is the gift, that the final issue depends on our future obedience to the heavenly calling. But other predestination than this, either to life or death eternal, the Scripture knows not of. It is a mere creature partiality, and not infinite justice—inconsistent with the express written Word, that speaks of God’s universal offers of grace, his invitations, promises, threatenings, being all

general. We are bidden to choose life, and reprehended for not doing it." We need say no more on this subject. "Search the Scriptures."

3. Some of the Calvinists maintain that final perseverance may be proved from the intrinsic efficacy of the atonement. They say: "If there were a possibility of God's children finally falling, then the death and intercession of Christ may be all in vain, and rendered abortive—an idea as derogatory to the divine glory, and as dishonourable to Jesus Christ, as possibly can be." This is altogether a process of false reasoning, and consequently proves nothing. We have before proved from Scripture, that what Christ has done, in the great work of atonement, is sufficient in both merit and efficacy to save the whole world; but if any man rejects the Saviour, or dishonours him by apostacy and finally falling away from grace, this by no means proves the *vanity* and *abortiveness* of the atonement, neither does it degrade the divine glory, or make Christ, in his mediatorial office, appear dishonourable. The divine character of redemption is a grand scheme of free grace, which provides salvation for the whole human race, for Christ "tasted death for every man;" and this salvation is received conditionally and perpetuated conditionally. Whosoever takes this *scriptural view* of the subject will see that if a child of God does finally fall, the death of Christ was not in vain: atonement is made for all, and millions through him will be brought to glory.

4. Final perseverance is argued from the work of the Spirit. The advocates of this doctrine say: "As the perseverance of the saints is by the agency of the Holy Spirit, they must persevere, or otherwise it would be a

reflection on this divine agent." To this we may answer: The work of grace in the human heart, which enables the saint to persevere, is certainly of the Divine Spirit; but the act of sin, and falling from grace, is not the work of the Spirit, but the work of the flesh. When David committed adultery, and dyed it with the blood of the injured and innocent, he was not under the preserving influence of the Spirit, but led captive by the devil and the lusts of the flesh. He had quenched the Spirit and given way to his carnal appetites; and if he had died in that state, his former righteousness could not have saved him. Ezek. xxxiii. 12. But David subsequently became a true penitent, and God healed his backslidings, and restored unto him the joy of his great salvation. (See Psalm li.) A learned Calvinistic author, when maintaining the doctrine of final perseverance, palliates David's conduct in the following language: "David:—probably infected with the notion of oriental sovereignty. Unsuspected error of polygamy. Prosperity, indolence, luxury, unguarded passion. Under all these circumstances he might be very insensible to his real guilt." But if perseverance be the work of the Holy Spirit, and consequently the saints must persevere, which is the Calvinistic argument (see Buck's Theo. Dic.), the Calvinists blame the Divine Spirit, and not David, for his having fallen from grace. But the facts in reference to David are plain. However men may try to excuse him, on account of "being immersed in state business, court pleasure," &c., his conduct was wicked. In an unguarded moment, when evidently in a comparatively low state of grace, he gave way to temptation, yielded to the lusts of the flesh, committed an awful crime; and this fall is not to

be attributed to the Holy Spirit, but to himself. "Nathan said unto David, *thou art the man.*" And David stood before the prophet a guilty, blood-stained, trembling criminal—a backslider, in danger of damnation ; but he humbled himself, and God had mercy upon him, "and abundantly pardoned him."

5. The doctrine of final perseverance, we are told, can be proved from various passages of Scripture. One passage which has frequently been quoted in confirmation of this doctrine is, "The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger." Job xvii. 9. Very true ; but "if the righteous man turn from his righteousness and doeth iniquity," he no longer holds on his way ; he turns back ; and "if any man draw back, my soul hath no pleasure in him, saith the Lord." If he keep his hands clean he shall grow stronger and stronger ; but if he pollute his hands, as did David and Solomon, his spiritual strength will soon depart. Hence we see in this passage that perseverance and strength are hinged on righteousness and purity. But we are told that "the Lord will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance." Psalm xciv. 14. Certainly he will not, if they obey his voice and do his commandments, and thus retain those marks which will distinguish them as his people and his inheritance ; but, as David said unto his son Solomon, "if *they* forsake him, he will cast *them* off for ever." Besides, backsliders are not his people ; they are of their "father the devil, and they do his works." They are like the "wicked generation" whom our Lord compared to the man who is re-possessioned of the unclean spirits. (Matt. xii. 43-45.) Psalm cxxv. is brought

forward to prove final perseverance; and yet, strange to say, that very psalm concludes with the following words: "As for such as *turn aside* unto their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity." And the psalm throughout is designed to shew the security of "those who trust in the Lord," "those that be good" and "upright in their hearts." (See verses 1 to 4.) Sometimes great stress is laid on the words of the prophet Isaiah (liv. 10): "For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord." This chapter throughout is addressed to the Church, by way of consolation, in which is set forth the faithfulness and lovingkindness of the Lord; but there is nothing definite in reference to final perseverance.

The passage in Jeremiah, (ch. xxxii. 40) respecting God making an "everlasting covenant" with his people, which is frequently urged in favour of this doctrine, is evidently a prediction relative to the return of the Jews from captivity, and a promise of their final restoration; but there is no particular reference to the doctrine in question.

There are several passages in the New Testament which are brought forward to prove this doctrine; such as, "My sheep hear my voice, I give unto them eternal life, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hands." John x. 27, 28. Though the conditions of the believer's eternal security are not here stated, they are nevertheless implied. This is evident from the whole tenor of the Word of God. Hence Peter fell through presumption and fear. Great stress is laid on the words of Christ, uttered in his prayer to his

heavenly Father, "While I was with them in the world I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled." John xvii. 12. But this passage is directly against final perseverance. It clearly proves that *one* whom the Father had given him is lost, namely "the son of perdition." It may be said that Judas was not given in the same way or in the same sense as the other apostles. This is a mere conjecture. Christ speaks indiscriminately: "Those that thou gavest me I have kept . . . . but the son of perdition." God, foreseeing his apostacy, foretold by the psalmist, "that his days should be few, and another should take his place."

In support of the doctrine of final perseverance, Mr. Finney, in his "Lectures to Professing Christians," page 103, lays great stress on the following passage: "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of." 2 Cor. vii. 10. He seems to think that this passage settles the question, in favour of the Calvinistic view, beyond all doubt or contradiction. . Hence he says: "The individual who has truly repented will never change back again, or go back to the love of sin; he goes on to the very rest of heaven. We see then that the saints' final perseverance is true," &c. If Mr. Finney can see the doctrine of final perseverance in this passage, we must give him credit for being gifted with some extraordinary power of penetration; for we presume that the generality of readers can see nothing of the kind; and we cannot but think that his object in digressing from the subject he was discussing (repentance) was merely to enforce his private sentiments on this particular theory. The meaning of the apostle is

very evident from his preceding remarks. He is speaking of the difference between worldly and godly sorrow, especially in reference to their results: "Worldly sorrow worketh death," but "godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation"—a change of mind, feeling, and conduct, which terminates in salvation, or conversion and regeneration—"not to be repented of." But this phrase does not necessarily imply Mr. Finney's idea, namely, that a man who has once truly repented *cannot* change his mind and practices again; but that he will have no reason to repent of turning to God and obtaining salvation. Mark, the text does not say he *never will* or that he *never can* "change back again," but simply "*not to be repented of.*" If a man who once truly repents can never "turn aside," "draw back," or, to use Mr. Finney's phrase, "change back again," there never was, nor ever can be, such a character as a backslider; and consequently all the warnings, threatenings, exhortations, and conditional promises contained in the Bible, relative to such characters, are utterly useless, or at least expressions which can never be carried into effect, and many statements in Scripture respecting such characters are untrue. We think, therefore, all these things considered, that Mr. Finney's remarks on the above passage are totally incorrect, and his reasoning falls to the ground "like water which cannot be gathered up again."

There are several other passages which are pressed into the service of Calvinistic authors to prove the final perseverance of the saints; but, having carefully examined them, and found that they are similar in their meaning to some which we have already considered, we deem it useless to multiply quotations which are all of the same class, and



subject to the same rules of criticism and modes of interpretation. We shall therefore now turn to the other side of the question, and endeavour to shew the possibility of apostacy and of finally falling from a state of grace.

1. The possibility and danger of falling away from a state of saving grace may be argued from the fact, that God threatens to punish those who apostatise, and promises to save those who are faithful and obedient. These threatenings and promises are so numerous and explicit that no sober-minded reader can deny them, whatever may be the peculiarity of his creed. What form of words can be plainer and more pointed than the following?—"When I say to the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity, but thou hast delivered thy soul." Again, "when a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die; because thou hast not given him warning, *he shall die in his sin*, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, *that the righteous sin not*, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul." Ezek. iii. 18-21. And in another place the same prophet speaks equally plain, and as explicitly: "When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live: if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it. Again, when I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die; if

he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. Ezek. xxxiii. 13-15. On these and many similar passages, those who advocate the doctrine of final perseverance comment thus : " These texts do not so much as suppose the falling away of a truly good man ; they only shew what would be the consequence *if* such should fall away, but cannot prove that it ever in fact happens." According to this mode of reasoning we might, with as much propriety, say, These texts do not so much as suppose the possibility of a wicked man turning from his wickedness ; they only shew what would be the case *if* such should turn from their wickedness, but they do not prove that ever such a case happened. But all such comment is sheer quibbling, and at variance with the rules of sound criticism. According to the general character of God's threatenings and promises, the scriptural axiom is this: The perseverance of the godly consists in God's supporting grace and man's faithfulness ; and these two causes work in conjunction. Hence the apostle Paul says: " We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." And again: " Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do according of his good pleasure." God by his grace works in the hearts of his people both in willing and doing ; and being thus assisted, as moral agents they must " work together with him," and " give all diligence to make their calling and election sure."

" To patient faith the prize is sure,  
And all that to the end endure  
The cross, shall wear the crown."

2. It appears, from what the apostle says in his epistle to the Hebrews, that a godly man may fall so low in this life that it is impossible for him to be restored: "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted of the Word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they have crucified to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." Heb. vi. 3, 6. On this passage the advocates of the doctrine of absolute and final perseverance have propagated two theories—

(1.) Some of the old Calvinistic authors say that the characters here spoken of are "not truly godly men, but only such as have an external profession." Dr. Dwight makes a miserable comment in justification of this notion. One could scarcely think that any man, who had been accustomed to read the Bible, was sincere in making such remarks. For no words in the English language could set forth more clearly and fully the nature of experimental religion, than the words and phrases which are employed by the inspired apostle in the above passage: "Enlightened—tasted of the heavenly gift—made partakers of the Holy Ghost—tasted of the Word of God, and the powers of the world to come." These expressions most explicitly point out and describe the divine nature and essential characteristics of true religion, and a high state of saving grace.

(2.) Another notion held by many Calvinists in our day is, that the persons here described must be regarded as being in a state of saving grace; but the meaning of the

apostle is, that such could not possibly "fall away" to such a state of degeneracy as never to be restored. Then all the apostle says is mere trifling, or a play upon words, warning people against a danger to which they were not, nor ever could be, exposed. Some of the young Calvinistic divines, who glory in volubility of language, may act in this way to arrest the attention of the popular mind, and astonish an admiring multitude, who are carried away with the pomp of language and a flow of eloquence; but we cannot think that Paul the aged, when writing under the immediate influence of the Holy Ghost, would indulge in mere freaks of fancy, or resort to any delusive measure in order to stimulate to diligence. St. Paul was not a mere playful elocutionist, who indulged in hypothetical impossibilities or extravagant imaginations for the sake of either alarming needless fears or stimulating to duty. He took a higher and nobler stand. His object was to develop and enforce truth on sound principles and in intelligible and impressive forms of speech. Plain statements in the Word of God must not be regarded as mere suppositions, but as truths, or announcements of matters of fact. The passage before us is no parable, no mere hypothesis or supposition, but, as Wesley remarks, "it is a plain relation of fact," or of doctrinal truth. Such a fall is therefore possible. Hence the apostle urges the Hebrews to use the means of grace lest this should be the case with any of them: "And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." Heb. vi. 11, 12.

(3.) We are not to conclude from this passage that

all who in any way backslide or fall from grace must be eternally lost. No; the backslider, under ordinary circumstances, may return again to the Shepherd and Bishop of his soul, and find mercy. But if a man, who was once truly converted to God, and made a "partaker of the Holy Ghost, and the powers of the world to come," falls so low as to maliciously "deny the Lord who bought him," and "crucify to himself the Son of God afresh," and thereby "put him to an open shame," it seems, according to this portion of the Word of God, impossible to renew him again to repentance; because, so long as an apostate repudiates the cross, no means can be employed to bring about a restorative change. The cross is the power of God unto salvation, and the only power used by the Almighty to induce repentance. Let a man, who has experienced this power in its saving effects, deliberately reject it as an utterly invalid instrumentality—that is to say, let him reject it with deistical scepticism, *let him be true to this fatal delusion*—then no means can arouse him to repentance. If the cross fails, *because he will not admit of its validity*, every other argument will be altogether ineffectual. The apostle therefore is considering a possible case; or supposing a man in a given condition:—Such cases of fatal apostacy we have read of, and in most cases the restoration of backsliders is attended with extreme difficulty: "Therefore let him that assuredly standeth, take heed lest he fall," (Wesley's translation), and fall to rise no more.

3. Apostacy may be proved from both ancient and modern biography. I refer first to Solomon. But it has been said: "Of Solomon we have no sufficient information;

but, if he died in a state of impenitency, we have as much reason to say that he never had any true religion as that he had fallen from it ;” and that “we cannot accurately know the hearts and moral state of persons, neither at the time of their falling into sin nor afterwards.” It is true we cannot, and for this reason we ought to speak cautiously, and seriously pause before we pronounce on the destinies of the dead. But in reference to *Solomon* we think it is sufficiently clear, in the first place, that he was *once a godly man*, in a state of saving grace, and enjoyed the divine favour. Secondly, it is quite clear that *he fell from that state* ; the time and circumstances of his apostacy are accurately stated by the inspired historian. And, thirdly, it is admitted on all hands *that we are not furnished with any satisfactory proof of his restoration*.

1. In our opinion, Scripture furnishes us with clear and indubitable evidence of Solomon’s piety. He was a godly man, in a state of salvation. It is true that we are nowhere furnished with the particulars of his conversion to God, any more than we are with such circumstantials respecting many other great and good men who lived and “died in the faith.” We can only judge of his moral and religious character by reading his life and conduct. And what is said by the sacred historian concerning him? We are informed that “Solomon was named Jedidiah,” which signifies “beloved of the Lord.” 2 Sam. xii. 25. It is also said that “he loved the Lord, and walked in the statutes of his father David.” If David is to be believed. God said unto him, “Solomon thy son, he shall build my house and my courts : for I have chosen him to be *my son*, and I will be *his Father*.” 1 Chron. xxviii. 6. And as

God chose him, and recognised him as standing in the endearing relationship of a son, so “the Lord his God was with him, and magnified him exceedingly.” 2 Chron. i. 1. In the same chapter it is said, “In that night did God appear to him, and said unto him, Ask what I shall give thee.” And Solomon said, “Give me now wisdom and knowledge ; and the speech pleased the Lord,” &c. From these passages, it is evident that Solomon had communion with the Lord. But it may be said, All this relates merely to his throne, and the building of the temple, and affords no proof of his spirituality, or the religious state of his mind. We think such a conclusion is very rash ; especially so when we further consider the character of his religious worship, which on several occasions was spiritual and powerful. Read the sixth chapter of second Chronicles, and judge whether that prayer is not the effusion of an enlightened and pious mind, especially the conclusion : “Now, my God, let, I beseech thee, thine eyes be open. and let thine ears be attent unto the prayer that is made in this place. Now therefore arise, O Lord God, into thy resting place, thou, and the ark of thy strength ; let thy priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation, and let thy saints rejoice in goodness. O Lord God, turn not away the face of thine anointed : remember the mercies of David thy servant.” But it may be said, Though this prayer is very solemn, and the words indicative of pious thoughts, we have not sufficient proof that they proceeded from a *good heart* and a *sound mind*. Many prayers which contain holy and reverential thoughts, and words, and phrases of a devotional character, are not accompanied with true sincerity and living faith. This, we fear, is in many cases

true. But Solomon's prayer was offered up in spirit and in truth, in the beauty of holiness, and as such was acceptable to God; hence He manifested his approbation and glory: "Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifice; and the glory of the Lord filled the house, and the priests could not enter into the house of the Lord, because the glory of the Lord had filled the Lord's house." 2 Chron. vii. 1. Now, I maintain that the above facts prove, as far as external evidence goes, that Solomon was a pious man. What should we think of a man in our day, who should devote all his influence, time, money, and talents to the promotion and establishment of true religion; who should, in addition to this, exercise at the public means of grace, surrounded by the highest ecclesiastical functionaries in the kingdom; if, in connection with his public prayers, the divine influence were so powerfully to descend as to fill the place with the glory of God, &c.—who would question the piety of such an individual? Who would presume that his religion was merely in form, and that "in reality he was not a godly man?" We could scarcely find a man making any pretensions to sober religion, who would come to such a conclusion; and if we could meet with such an individual, we should regard him as an uncharitable bigot. Now, when Solomon ascended the throne of Judea, or immediately subsequent to that event, he was a man of practical piety, powerful in prayer, &c.; and consequently we infer he was a godly man, lived in the fear of the Lord, and enjoyed true religion.

2. From that state he fell. He apostatised, and



became a very wicked man. The cause and facts relative to his fall are clearly stated, and consequently we have nothing to imagine or conjecture. He first became licentious, and then idolatrous: "King Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharoah, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites." He transgressed the law of God relative to marriage; and what was the consequence? Such as might be expected: "It came to pass, *when Solomon was old*, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father." 1 Kings xi. 1-6. Whatever the faults, and failings, and sins of David might have been, he never turned polytheist, or gave the least countenance to idolatry. In this respect his heart was ever "perfect with the Lord his God." But Solomon sunk into the most abominable idolatry, and introduced polytheistic worship even in Jerusalem and throughout the country of Judea. 1 Kings xi. 7-10. Therefore there is nothing problematic in reference to his apostacy; and if there is no evidence of his restoration, we have strong reason to conclude that his fall was final—seeing, as we have before proved, that such a fall is possible, and that "*Solomon when he was old, turned away his heart after other gods.*" He "changed back again," and did not "go on to the very rest in heaven." But—

3. Was Solomon ever restored to the favour of God and a state of salvation? This is a very important question, and differently answered by men of different views. Some of those divines who advocate the doctrine of final perseverance, and the impossibility of finally falling from

grace, say : " We have evidence of his restoration in the book of Ecclesiastes," which they suppose he wrote in his old age, when he was reclaimed from his backslidings. On this hypothesis we remark —

(1.) It is almost certain that Solomon was the author of this book. This is generally admitted, both by Jews and Christians. It exhibits marks of Solomon's manner of writing; and in the first verse of the book he says, " The words of the preacher, the son of David, king of Jerusalem." But, supposing it were granted that Solomon was the author of it, and that he wrote it subsequently to his apostacy, which I think is very probable, it may be asked:

(2.) Does it contain sufficient spirituality and holiness of thought to prove that he was restored to a state of saving grace? We think not. And in this opinion we are not singular. Dr. Tomline, late Bishop of Winchester, says: " 'The book of Ecclesiastes, though of the didactic kind, differs from the preceding book, inasmuch as it seems to be confined to one single subject, namely, vanity.' " " It is very difficult to distinguish the arrangement and connection of the parts of this work; and there is so little elevation or dignity in its language, that the Rabbins will not allow it to be reckoned among the poetical books of Scripture." If Solomon wrote it a little before his death, which is very questionable, it is a proof that he was not a true penitent. There are many wise and true sayings respecting the vanity of all earthly things, and what constitutes man's chief good, namely, the fear of the Lord and keeping his commandments; and the design of the Almighty in causing the book to be written was evidently to teach these important lessons. But if Solomon had

written it in his old age, after he was restored to a state of true godliness, it certainly would have contained some thoughts and reflections relative to his feelings on being reclaimed from the error of his ways—some indications of deep humiliation and compunction of soul on account of his departure from God—and some holy joy which he experienced on his recovery from his apostate state. But this is not the case. Therefore, if the book in question be regarded as containing the experience of Solomon in his old age, we fear there is too much reason to conclude that he was never fully restored to the favour of God. The lessons taught and the precepts enjoined in the book of Ecclesiastes are good; but they are of a very different character from those of his father David, after he had returned penitently to God. All things considered, the book of Ecclesiastes proves nothing decisively and satisfactorily concerning the restoration of Solomon. But we are asked, “Does it seem likely that God would employ an old backslider to write an inspired book?” *Ans.* We know that the sayings, and doings, and experience of ungodly men are related in various parts of sacred Scripture, and in many cases irreligious men have been urged by a divine impulse to utter divine and important truths. Hence Balaam, the friends of Job, Saul, Nebuchadnezzar, and others, were all thus influenced. And Solomon, for wise and important ends, might have been thus wrought upon by a divine influence to relate and record his experience in his apostate state. One learned author, in examining the question relative to Solomon’s apostacy, says: “Of Solomon we have no sufficient information; but if he died in ~~impenitence~~ <sup>impenitence</sup>, we have as much reason to say that he never

had any true religion, as that he had fallen from it." (Dr. Pye Smith. F. L.'s, page 611.) This laconic and dogmatic method of deciding on a much controverted subject, and a subject of such vast importance, may satisfy those who believe a statement to be correct, simply on the authority of another; but it amounts to nothing in the estimation of intelligent and inquiring minds. I think it has been clearly shewn—first, that Solomon once had true religion; secondly, that he fell from grace; and, thirdly, that we have no satisfactory evidence of his restoration, but rather of the contrary; and consequently the probability, if not the certainty, is, that Solomon died an apostate.

The conclusion is awful, but it is such as we are warranted to come to, after having carefully read the life of this extraordinary man. This opinion will not in the least affect his destiny, whatever it be, but it may perhaps serve as a warning to the living. If God spared not Solomon, the beloved—the type of Christ—the great—the wise and good—take heed, trifling backslider, thou who art relying on past experience for eternal safety, whoever thou art, "lest he spare not thee."

Another Scripture character, who is spoken of as having apostatised and finally fallen away from grace, is Judas. Much has been said by learned commentators respecting this "son of perdition." Some think that he never was a truly godly man; and consequently cannot be regarded as having fallen from grace. This opinion, however, is disputed by others, who think they have sufficient *in Scripture* to warrant the conclusion that he was once in a state of grace, but through satanic agency *fell*. We may also add, that some entertain an opinion that he was ultimately

restored; namely, that he sincerely repented of his wicked deeds, and obtained the mercy of God. But what saith the Scriptures?

In the first place, it is clear that he was chosen by our Lord, "*being one of the twelve,*" to preach the gospel; that he was endowed with miraculous power, and was made a partaker of the Holy Ghost. For, as the Saviour, in the tenth chapter of Matthew, spoke indiscriminately concerning the twelve whom he had chosen; what is said of the twelve is said of Judas. "Then Christ called to him (Judas), and gave him power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of diseases (chap. x. 1); and he sent him to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, to preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand; to heal the sick, cleanse the leper, raise the dead, cast out devils," &c. He was sent forth by Christ *as a sheep* among wolves, and was subject to persecution; but was told to take no thought what he should speak when he should be brought before magistrates, &c.; "for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." (Verses 15 to 20.) "He that receiveth you," said Christ to Judas, "receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth Him that sent me." (Verse 40.) And when Christ was praying for his disciples, he said, addressing his heavenly Father, "Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost *but the son of perdition.*" John xvii. 12. We learn then that Judas, in the commencement of his apostleship, was treated in all respects like the other apostles. He was given by the Father to the Son—had bestowed upon him the gift of miracles, and was divinely assisted by the Holy Ghost.

Now, does it seem reasonable to suppose that this would have been the case if he, *at the time*, had been an ungodly man? We have just as much reason to believe that Peter was an ungodly man as Judas. Peter fell, but, like David, he sincerely repented, and was restored. Judas, like Solomon, fell; and we have no evidence of his restoration. He is designated "the son of perdition," which, according to Macknight, and several other learned authors, signifies in the original "one who deserves death," "a child of hell, or one who deserves hell."

But it may be said that, if it is possible for godly men to fall finally, the probability is that such occurrences would take place at the present day. *Certainly*; and we fear there are characters and cases to be found, in our day, somewhat similar to those of Solomon and Judas. We hope that there are not many cases of final apostacy, but we have strong reason to fear there are some. Hence we have heard and read of persons, and have known some few, who, after making a good profession of Christianity, have fallen away, and have departed this life without giving any satisfactory evidence of their restoration to the favour and grace of God. It may be said in reference to these cases, that their religion consisted in a profession only. But this is setting up theory and human opinion in opposition to the most palpable and conclusive evidence of facts. It must be admitted that we cannot search any man's heart, or infallibly judge of the state and moral condition of his mind, by his outward conduct. For that which in many instances "is highly esteemed amongst men, is an abomination in the sight of God." Yet there are certain rules laid down by Christ and his apostles, and in the Scriptures

generally, by which we may safely judge of a man's real and true character. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." If, therefore, a man makes a good profession of faith, and professes to experience the saving power of religion in his soul; and if, in addition to this, he gives practical evidence that he is a truly converted man, by a prompt and uniform attention to the divine requirements in reference to his moral and religious duties; I maintain that we have no just reason to suspect his sincerity, or to conclude that he is either a hypocrite or a mere formalist. But if that man "turns away from his righteousness, and doeth iniquity according to that which the wicked man doeth," we must regard him as a backslider; and if we have no subsequent evidence of his restoration—if he never repents and turns again to the Shepherd and Bishop of his soul—we cannot do otherwise than regard him as having finally fallen away from grace. To come to any other conclusion would be assuming what does not belong to man, namely, the power of knowing independently of external evidence or without any logical or moral proof. If the Bible anywhere distinctly and explicitly stated that a man, once in a state of saving grace, could never finally fall, the above arguments would be invalid and worthless; but we have before proved that such passages of Scripture as are brought forward to prove the doctrine of final perseverance, or the impossibility of falling *finally* from a state of grace, are inconclusive, and, according to the general method of interpreting Scripture, may be so explained as to import a contrary meaning. Throughout the whole of the Bible, the conditions of final perseverance are either specified or evidently

implied. Conditional threatenings and promises respecting the final salvation of the righteous, run through the Old and New Testaments.

Nothing short of humble and faithful perseverance in duties pertaining to life and godliness, and a continued reliance on the grace and power of God, through Christ, will secure our salvation, either for time or eternity. This is evidently the doctrine taught by Moses and the prophets, and strictly inculcated by Christ and his apostles: "And if any man speak not according to the law and the testimony, it is because there is no light in him." St. Paul, in his first epistle to the Corinthians (chap. x.), referring to the manner in which God punished and destroyed some of the Jewish people who sinned against him, adds, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come; wherefore let him that *thinketh* he standeth take heed lest he fall." On which Mr. Wesley remarks, "The word translated *thinketh*, most certainly strengthens rather than weakens the sense." Hence he translates the passage thus: "Let him that *assuredly* standeth take heed lest he fall." This version will appear preferable even to the common English reader. The sense is complete and intelligible. A man who *merely thinks* he stands, or according to *Griesbach*, "*seemeth*" to stand, but in reality does not, would have nothing to fall from; and if admonished respecting his condition, the admonition, we may suppose, would have been worded differently, so as to have reproved him for his delusion and *fancied* security. We perhaps cannot conclude this important subject better than in the language of St. Paul to the Romans. Referring to the Jews, he



says: "Because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest *by faith*"—(not by election.) "Be not highminded, but fear: for *if* God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he spare not thee. Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, *if* thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off, and they also, *if* they abide not in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graff them in again." Rom. xi. 20, 23. Though these words were originally written in reference to the Jews and Gentiles generally, they may nevertheless be considered applicable to individual cases. In the above passage we may see in what sense the apostle used the *IF*; viz., to shew what *may take place*, and what *has taken place*: for "God did not spare the natural branches," but cut them off; and what *will take place* in reference to those who "stand by faith," *if* they do not continue in God's goodness, they also shall be cut off, totally and finally.

## XXVIII. GOD'S MORAL GOVERNMENT.

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**THE** subject of Moral Government is profound and mysterious. Reference to Mr. Finney's remarks. What is implied in Moral Government. Man is an intelligent and accountable being. God is the Supreme Moral Governor. Difference of opinion on the origin of Polytheism. Moral Government in relation to man particularly defined. The rules of Moral Government. God does not rule over man as an arbitrary despot: God rules by the law of love. The moral law, or Ten Commandments, considered. What is implied in man's accountability. God's decrees in reference to man cannot be eternal, unconditional, and unalterable, as this would be incompatible with man's accountability. Sanctions, or rewards and punishments. The last judgment. The final sentence. Hell, how spoken of in Scripture; Milton's description. Heaven will be eternally enjoyed by Saints.

**PERHAPS** no subject has occupied the attention of theologians so much, and has been more minutely and extensively elaborated by moral philosophers, than God's moral government of the universe. The subject in itself, when gravely considered, is so profound, and in many respects so mysterious, that it requires clearness of mental vision and enlargement of thought in order to form correct notions of its true character, the nature of its administration, and the ultimate results in relation to future rewards and punishments. On these subjects Mr. Finney makes many useful and important remarks. But, upon the whole, his definition of moral government, and its relative bearing on those subjects which he considers are essentially associated there.

with, are so lengthy, and his divisions and distinctions so multifarious, that it is almost impossible to understand him. Besides, some of his remarks on the divine right of government appear to be irreverent and presumptuous, as well as altogether superfluous.

Without even mentioning the many nice and superfluous distinctions which a *minute* investigation of the nature and character of God's moral government seems to suggest, and which have been discussed by several eminent authors, we shall proceed to notice a few of the most important particulars. God's moral government necessarily implies the following particulars: namely, moral agents who are governed, a moral Governor, moral laws, the accountability of moral agents who are governed, and future rewards and punishments awarded by the Governor to the moral agents who are the subjects of such moral laws. These subjects we shall briefly consider in order:—

1. Moral government, then, is God's government of intelligent and accountable beings by a code of laws calculated to promote their happiness, and to illustrate the infinite wisdom, almighty power, unsullied justice, and immutable goodness of the Great Eternal Mind. This view of the subject accords with the views of Dr. Pye Smith, who defines moral government thus: "The Infinite Being manifesting his perfections in the supporting of moral order among intelligent creatures; or, subjecting rational creatures to law, and dealing with them according to the sanctions of that law." (F. L.'s, page 160.) Many eminent authors have expressed their ideas on this subject in similar language. I wish it to be distinctly understood that I do not intend in this essay to take a general view of God's

moral government, but simply to consider it in relation to mankind while in their present state of being. Jehovah is the supreme Governor of the universe, and consequently *moral government* is a phrase applicable to the management of the universal economy, or the government of all intelligent beings throughout the empire of universal dominion. All created minds, wherever they exist, and whatever are their capabilities, must be under some form of government, and of course under the control of the Supreme Being, and that government must be moral in its character. I shall not however take this extensive view of the subject, but consider it more particularly in that restricted sense which has just been pointed out; namely, in relation to man in his present state of being and future destiny.

Man is a free and moral agent, capable of receiving and rightly using a prescribed code of morals, by which to regulate his conduct and thereby to make himself useful and happy. This proposition is a philosophical axiom; and every method resorted to by ingenious minds to overturn it is an additional confirmation of the palpable truth which it contains. But it may be asked, What is it which constitutes mind, intelligence, or the capacity for thinking, reasoning, &c.? Those who believe in the materiality of the mind argue that it consists in the peculiar qualities and formation of matter. We have before proved this notion to be unphilosophical—a groundless hypothesis, unscriptural, and at variance with the established laws of the physical universe. Therefore, the only rational answer which we are capable of giving to the inquiry is: When God made man, by a *divine inspiration* he *created* in him “a living soul”—a rational, intelligent, and immortal

nature. That nature is not composed of mixed, jarring elements, such as earth, air, fire, and water, but is purely spiritual, possessing spiritual attributes and moral capabilities, and consequently constitutes man a fit subject to receive and reduce to practice moral laws suitable to the state and condition, in the scale of physical and intellectual existence, in which the Author of his being has thought proper to place him. And we find this is really the case. It is no metaphysical theory or psychological hypothesis. Every man has an internal moral evidence of this undeniable fact. He can think and reason, and, under the influence of certain motives, perform moral actions. And we have also external evidence, in constant practical development in the conduct of human beings, everywhere manifest. Men reason and act from motives. We admit that in many cases they reason falsely, and act from base and impure motives, but still they demonstrate the fact that the mind is a moral and intelligent being, vastly elevated above mere matter, or that instinct and limited knowledge which we see developed in the brute creation. (See "Butler's Works in one vol.," page 27.)

But this great fact may not only be proved from human nature, abstractedly considered, but also from the formation of human society, and the relative position which we are individually obligated to sustain while in the present life. No man, properly speaking, can live alone; he may merely exist for a short time in a solitary condition, but he is made for society, to form part of a family, part of a community, part of a world. He is designed to fill a station, and to act a part on the great theatre of human life. He must therefore have laws by which to govern his moral conduct,

and to guide him in the discharge of all his social, commercial, political, and religious duties. What would be the consequences if all moral difference between right and wrong were obliterated, and every man acted as he thought proper? Anarchy and confusion, death and destruction would soon overspread our world and entomb it in shades of horror. We see, then, that man is so constituted in himself, and so circumstanced in the grand economy of human life, that he is necessarily the subject of moral government.

II. There is therefore *one*, and only *one* *Supreme Governor*. The idea of one Supreme Governor was not entirely eradicated from the minds of the ancient heathens. Though the theology of ancient paganism taught the doctrine of a plurality of governing powers, whom they called gods, the wisest of them believed in the existence of one Supreme Being, to whom all the inferior deities were subject; and that He was more excellent, more glorious, and in every sense superior to all the rest. They looked upon the world as *one great empire* divided into various provinces, every one of which has a certain order of divinities presiding over it; and the different nations considered it right for all people to worship those *demi-gods* which they fancied ruled over them. But they admitted that these inferior deities were overruled, and subject to the one Supreme Governor of the universe. Among what people and in what age the notion of polytheism originated we cannot safely determine. Some learned men have supposed that the worship of the heavenly bodies prevailed, almost universally, at the time of the general deluge, and was the occasion of the destruction of the old world by

that dreadful judgment. This, we are informed, was the opinion of Onkelos, Maimonides, and other celebrated rabbins, who interpret the words "Then began men to call on the name of the Lord," (Gen. vi. 11,) by translating them, "In those days men seceded from calling on the name of the Lord," by which they understand "that the most glorious name of God was then given to his creatures." The learned Selden endorsed this opinion. Lightfoot also translates the passage, "Then began profaneness in calling on the name of the Lord;" and Heidegger, in his eighth Dissertation on the Theology of the Cainites and the Antediluvian Idolatry, adduces many arguments to prove that idolatry was the corruption before the flood. Dr. A. Clarke says, "Many eminent men have contended that *huchal*, which we translate *began*, should be rendered *began profanely*, or *then profanation began*, and from this they date the origin of idolatry." He then furnishes us with a quotation from "Maimonides' Treatise on Idolatry." Dr. Clarke's Comment on Gen. iv. 26.

It is confidently affirmed by Lucian and Herodotus that idolatry originated in Egypt, thence spread throughout Chaldea, Mesopotamia, and the adjoining countries. M. L'Abbé de Tressan, in his mythological history, supposes that idolatry, or the idea of a plurality of governing deities, originated in Asia, among the ancient Chaldeans, so early as in the days of Nimrod, their first king. (H. North's ed. pages 8 and 23). This idea of Nimrod is most likely borrowed from the "Targum of Rabbi Joseph," which says, "Nimrod began to be a mighty man in sin, a murderer of innocent men, and a rebel before the Lord." (1 Chron. i. 10.) "And he said unto the children of men, *depart from the*

*religion of Shem*, and cleave to the institutes of Nimrod." This idea of Nimrod is confirmed by the "Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel," which says, "From the foundation of the world none was ever found like Nimrod, powerful in hunting and in rebellion against the Lord." Dr. A. Clarke says, "The Septuagint calls him *a surly giant*," the Arabic, "*a terrible tyrant*," and the Syric "*a warlike giant*." And Mr. Bryant, in his *Mythology* (vol. iii. page 33-36), considers him as the principal instrument of the idolatry that afterwards prevailed in the family of Cush ; and describes him as "An arch-rebel against God."

How far this impious innovator and "rebellious tyrant" and his adherents succeeded in leading mankind astray from God we cannot say; but it is evident, from sacred history, that idolatry subsequently became the prevailing religion in the land of Uz, or in the land of Chaldea. Hence Joshua, when he assembled the elders of Israel in Shechem, said: "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor; *and served other gods*." It is also evident that about that time, and a little while after, the knowledge of the true God was still retained in Palestine and in Egypt. "Melchisedeck, king of Salem, was the priest of the most high God who made heaven and earth." Abimelech, king of Gerar, and his successors who bore the same name, feared God, swore by his name, and admired his power. The threats of the mighty God were also dreaded by king Pharaoh. But in the time of Moses, the nations generally were fallen into idolatry, so that the true God was only known to the Egyptians as "the God of the Hebrews."



Orpheus, whose theological principles were adopted by the celebrated Plato and Pythagorus, lived long before Hesiod and Homer, and we are informed by ancient historians that he went into Egypt for the purpose of being instructed and obtaining a knowledge of their divinity. And from the Egyptians he brought the following definitions of him whom they considered the Supreme Being and governor of all things: "There exists an unknown being, who is the highest and most ancient of all beings, and author of all things; this sublime being is life, light, and knowledge. These three names are expressive of that power which out of nothing formed all things, *visible* and *invisible*." It is a remark worthy of being noticed here, that Revelation says, "*God is love*." This moral perfection of the divine character seemed to have been unknown among the ancient heathens. His wisdom, power, and glory were recognised in his works; but his infinite benevolence was overlooked. Orpheus also furnishes us with another eloquent description of this *then* unknown being, to whom is given a name, either by himself or by some subsequent author. In the following quotation *Jehovah* is called *Jupiter*: "The universe was formed by Jupiter; the heavens, profound Tartarus, the earth, and ocean, the immortal gods and goddesses; whatever is, whatever was, whatever shall be, were originally contained in, and proceed from, the fruitful bosom of Jupiter. He is the first and last, the beginning and the end; all things are emanations from him, he is the life and cause of all things; he is the first father, there is only one power, one God, one king *who governs all*." Such, we are informed, were the sublime ideas which Orpheus received from the ancient Egyptians,

which, if correct, clearly shews that they believed at that time in the existence of *one supreme*, eternal being ; who is the author of all things, and the absolute governor of the moral and material universe. And we may add, that all notions antagonistic to these are evidently contrary, not only to Revelation, but to the ideas held by many of the most learned even amongst the ancient pagans ; and also to the notions held by the Platonians and Pythagoreans, and the most enlightened philosophers of Greece and Rome in more modern times.

We conclude, then, that God is the moral Governor of all rational beings that exist in the universe : men and devils, angels and principalities, thrones and dominions, are all under his sovereign control, and must submit to his divine authority. But our remarks on this subject, as we have already observed, must be understood as relating principally to man, and the government which God exercises over him in the present life. In order that the reader may be able to form correct ideas on this subject, it may be necessary to submit a few suggestive considerations.

1. When we contemplate man as an intelligent being, standing in various important relations to God and an eternal state of existence, it seems essentially necessary that a form of moral government should exist in relation to his conduct, accountability, and eternal destiny ; and that the laws by which he must be governed should be suitable to his moral and intelligent nature, namely, laws comprehending motives to excite attention and secure obedience. As one able writer on this subject justly remarks, " Moral agents must be governed by moral considerations."

2. The happiness and well-being of the human race depend, if not absolutely, yet to a great extent, upon moral order, which is the result of obedience to the divine law, which must be regarded as the standing rule of duty, *binding upon all men*, according to the circumstances in which they are placed and the extent of the knowledge which they possess.

3. It necessarily follows that there must be one Supreme Head, or Governing Mind, who is infinite in wisdom and power, and whose almighty will is law—a Being who has an indisputable right to make laws and administer them according to his own good pleasure, and to whose holy and authoritative decisions all the subjects of such laws must submit, under a consciousness of their righteousness and infallibility.

4. Those who defy the authority of this Supreme Mind and violate the divine laws, must be punished; on the other hand the obedient shall be rewarded. Without these *remunerating* and *vindictory* results the laws would be sanctionless; that is, they would have no motives to obedience, only such as might arise from a sense of our moral duty to God as a Being of infinite perfections. But these are considerations which perhaps never sway or influence the human mind till it is aroused by other motives, which are comprehended in remuneration and vindication. Therefore law without sanction would be useless; indeed there can be no law without sanction.

5. The foregoing considerations, we presume, will be sufficient to convince every individual who duly considers the subject, that God, who is the creator of the universe, must be its moral Governor; and we may also remark,

that every man seems to carry in his own breast evidence of the same important fact. The very laws of his nature are so framed as to convince him that he is responsible to God for his conduct; and no man can readily throw off this conviction. No man can become an Atheist, and say "in his heart there is no God," without first shutting his eyes against the clearest light, and wickedly stifling the convictions and feelings of his own nature.

6. Then God is the only Being in the universe whose natural attributes and moral perfections qualify him for the government of all intelligent beings. The Governor of countless millions of minds existing in every part of the universe must be a Being of infinite perfections, which cannot belong to any created being, however exalted in rank and station. Therefore the self-existent and eternal Jehovah is the Supreme Governor and Ruler of all created beings. This important truth might be argued and proved from many considerations and palpable facts relative to the character of God, and the relation in which he stands to the moral universe. Besides, the Bible, which has been proved to be a revelation from God, contains a most simple and yet comprehensive system of moral government. No subject in the Bible is more clearly revealed and prominently set forth than that which demonstrates the moral government of God. It is also strongly supported by human reason, and is consistent in the highest degree with deductive evidence, when illustrated by the doctrine of analogy. (See Butler on this subject.)

III. Let us now consider the rules and principles of moral government. Though God is the absolute and sole governor of the human race, and of all created minds, he

does not rule as an arbitrary despot, or as an imperial tyrant, independent of any constitution, laws, or fixed principles by which to regulate the conduct of his subjects. Such lawless sovereignty is sometimes indirectly attributed to the divine Being by the advocates of unconditional election and reprobation, in order to establish their peculiar doctrines. But the revealed Word of God everywhere shews that he governs by equitable and universal laws, consistent with the justice and purity of his moral nature. The laws by which he governs moral agents in our world are explicitly laid down in the Bible; the substance of which laws is comprehended in the *decalogue*, or Ten Commandments. But, beside these, there are many other precepts laid down in the Old and New Testament, which are to be regarded as laws and rules designed to regulate our moral conduct. Very many of the rites and ceremonies which embody the characteristics of morality, and also many natural laws of moral tendency, may be regarded as comprehended in that system of divine government which is devised for the benefit and happiness of moral and intelligent beings. This view of the subject is admitted by many eminent authors who have studied and written on this subject. But the general or common idea of God's moral government is, that it consists in the government of intelligent and rational beings by such laws as are directly suited to guide and regulate man's moral nature, in relation to those duties which result in the honour of God and the happiness of man, (see "Finney's Theo. Skel." page 281, and "Bishop Butler's complete Works," page 35 to 53.)

The spirit of these laws may be summed up in a very few words: "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,*

*and thy neighbour as thyself."* On these two great commandments, we are informed, hang all the law and the prophets. That is, the substance of what is contained in the law of Moses, and the several duties inculcated by the prophets, are suspended or based on this great and god-like principle—namely, love. And from this source spring all the duties which we owe to God and to our fellow-men. It would be no hard matter to shew that every moral precept laid down in the Bible is in harmony with this divine principle. And all human laws, which are made for the benefit of societies and nations, should be framed with a steady reference to righteousness and benevolence. The celebrated Lord Bacon says, "A king ought to make the religion of the Bible the rule of government;" and we might add, he who does not, if "weighed in the balances," would be "found wanting." The character of those laws which grow out of benevolence, must be virtuous in their nature and beneficial in their tendency; especially so when that benevolence is associated with and guided by unerring wisdom, which must be the case in reference to the moral laws of God. No benevolent and intelligent being would alter them if he had it in his power. I have heard of a celebrated lawyer, who was a deist, being convinced of the divinity of the sacred Scriptures, simply by carefully reading over the "*Ten Commandments*;" declaring, after a minute examination of their principles, that they were so virtuous, full, and comprehensive, contrasted with any human code of laws, that they must be of divine origin.

If a person of the most enlightened views and extensive knowledge were to undertake to improve the morality of the Bible, where must he commence to make his emenda-

tions? Take, for example, the "*Ten Commandments*." Are they not "holy, just, and good?" and does not the keeping of them promote order and happiness? while on the other hand a violation of those laws is productive of disorder and misery.

It has frequently been asserted by atheistical and deistical authors, that "the Bible puts vice for virtue, and virtue for vice," &c.

The notorious Robert Owen published these impious sentiments to the world a few years ago. In order to shew the folly and *wickedness* of such a belief, let us suppose practices contrary to the Ten Commandments and the general teaching of the Bible to be *virtuous*, and that men indulge in them freely without restraint or punishment. God must be hated, instead of loved; a plurality of deities must be worshipped rather than God, and men must bow down to graven images and painted statues; the name of God must be vainly and wantonly used; the Sabbath must be obliterated from our national calendar, and men and beasts must have no rest the whole year round; fathers and mothers must be dishonoured, and disobeyed; murder, adultery, and falsehood must be rewarded; in fact all kinds of wickedness may be committed with impunity. The consequences resulting from such misnamed *morality* would soon blight the fairest prospects of human life, and change the abode of the human race into a moral hell, and yet many of our public journalists, since the death of Robert Owen, have spoken of him as being a very intelligent, virtuous, and benevolent man. I cannot speak in reference to his general moral conduct, but this I do know, that his theory, his principles, and his teachings, were impious, foolish and

brutish. Every enlightened and virtuous mind cannot but admire the excellency and moral beauty, the utility and importance, of the laws of God which were originally given to Moses, and subsequently inculcated by Christ and his apostles. And it is a remark worthy of our attention, that in the New Testament the standard of morality is elevated ; and its precepts with regard to purity and refinement, when contrasted with Jewish morality, manifest a striking superiority. Hence, the grand doctrines of forbearance and forgiveness, and of the exercise of pure and disinterested benevolence, are more clearly set forth in the gospel than they were under the dispensation of the Old Testament.

It is a matter which deserves distinct notice, that God's laws must be *willingly obeyed*. The divine Governor requires loyalty at heart as well as external decorum and practical obedience. If the subjects of an earthly prince or any human government give no visible evidence of disloyalty, they are regarded as good and faithful subjects, though they may hate the laws by which they are governed, and have no real and sincere affection for their governor. But God requires mental obedience, supreme love, and perfect submission to his righteous and holy government, and disobedience in heart as well as in life is threatened with severe punishment. That religion, by whatsoever name it may be distinguished, which absolves us from obligation to keep and obey the law of God, is an utter abomination, unreasonable, anti-scriptural, and tends to damnation.

IV. Moral Government implies accountability. The present life with man is a probationary state, introductory.



to a life of endless duration. Hence, our moral actions during this life must be viewed in relation to our eternal destinies. We must give an account to God "for the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or bad." On this subject Bishop Butler says: "Our future interest is *now* dependent upon ourselves; that we have scope and opportunities here for that good and bad behaviour which God will reward or punish hereafter; together with temptation to one as well as inducements of reason to the other. And this is in a great measure the same as saying that we are under the moral government of God, and must ere long give an account of our actions to him." But, if "whatever comes to pass in time is the execution of eternal decrees"—if the doctrine of fatality is true, or if man is the creature of necessity or circumstances—how, or on what principles of moral equity can we prove his responsibility? These doctrines, separately considered, seem to involve a contradiction which it is impossible to reconcile. Hence, some who have insisted on man's being the subject of fatality, or a creature of circumstances, have strongly contended for his non-responsibility, and asserted that it is unreasonable and unrighteous first to constitute man a creature of necessity, and then hold him responsible for actions over which he had no manner of control. Others, however, who profess to be more enlightened and pious, have maintained, that although man's actions and moral character are decreed from all eternity, and that consequently he is and must be just what such decrees have determined him to be, still God in his sovereign prerogative sees it right and just to hold him responsible for his moral actions. In my judgment, both these theories are

unscriptural, and repugnant to the great fundamental principles comprehended in God's moral government of his intelligent and accountable creatures. It must be admitted that in many instances circumstances have a very powerful influence on man's moral conduct ; but it is also an undeniable fact, that in many instances man is the creator or cause of those circumstances which have a mighty influence on the subsequent formation and development of his moral character. This fact is strikingly conspicuous in the lives of many distinguished men, who have risen out of obscurity and poverty to great eminence and wealth ; and in a less degree it may be seen in every individual who lives to mature age. And as to God's decreeing and fixing man's actions from all eternity, and then holding him responsible for the performance of such actions, that is a doctrine so shocking to our feelings, and so repugnant to both reason and revelation, that it ought to be universally regarded as a detestable falsehood and an impious misrepresentation of the divine character. It is clear from the exhortations, warnings, threatenings, reproofs, promises, and denunciations of Scripture, that God has made man a moral agent, capable of choosing or refusing, of obeying or disobeying, the divine commands. It is also equally evident that man is, in this life, on a state of trial or probation ; and to regulate his conduct in this probationary life, God has given him a multitude of laws and precepts, the keeping of which will secure his future happiness, but their violation will inevitably involve the transgressor in ruin. Much has been said and written by learned and talented divines, to prove the possibility of man's being accountable to God for the performance of those actions which the Almighty

has eternally decreed, and thereby made matter of necessity. But no argument, however plausible and skilfully managed, can make that true which is really false, or that right which is radically and essentially wrong. And the idea of making man accountable, and punishing him for actions which he is necessitated *by an Almighty power* to perform, is contrary to all enlightened ideas of righteousness, and incompatible with both the justice and mercy of God. This is so palpably evident to every reflecting mind, who is not previously biased and blinded by human creeds, that it requires no argument to make it more plainly manifest. It may be necessary, before concluding this part of the subject, to remark, that in order to see the wisdom, righteousness, justice, and goodness of God operating in perfect harmony in relation to his moral government, the whole subject must be viewed in connection with the divine scheme of human redemption. Apart from this there is no pardon for the guilty, no salvation for the sinner. But God's moral government, through the great atonement made by Christ, provides salvation for all who comply with the divine requirements.

V. Finally, God enforces his laws, and urges upon man the necessity of a compliance with them, by *sanctions*. We are informed that positive rewards will be bestowed upon the obedient, and direct punishment inflicted on the disobedient. And such rewards and punishments are to be regarded as constituting the sanctions of the law, and legitimate motives to secure obedience. This divine adjudication on man's moral actions proves the truthfulness and consistency of the preceding conclusions in reference to human responsibility. For, if it is just to

punish and right to reward man for the performance of his moral actions, there must be something blameable or praiseworthy in such actions, which must be the result, not of *necessity*, but of *moral freedom*, exercised in either vice or virtue, and thereby constituting either positive guilt or moral goodness.

Rewards and punishments necessarily imply *adjudication*, or the fact that man will be judged for his actions. Hence, "God will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom he hath ordained," (Acts xvii. 31.) namely, Jesus Christ, "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son." "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ." The undivided Trinity will judge the world in the person of Jesus Christ. "Unto him every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess, to the glory of God the Father." This is true both of men and devils: for "the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, "Behold, the Lord cometh, with thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all the ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." Jude vi. 14, 15. The prophecy in Daniel (vii. 9.) seems to refer to the same important event: "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and

came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened." Compare this awful description with Revelation xx. 11-15: "And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heavens fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." The judgment being set, the opening of the books, an investigation of the records of those books, the earth and the sea giving up their dead, and hell, or the invisible world of spirits, giving back the souls of the dead; and the universal family of man, "small and great, standing before God," are all expressions which denote adjudication. And this doctrine is more clearly and emphatically stated by our Lord himself in Matt. xxv. 31-33. In this passage our Saviour represents himself as appearing in tremendous grandeur. We have not a more striking passage of the truly sublime in the sacred writings; as Wesley observes, "We can hardly read it without imagining ourselves before the awful tribunal it describes." Christ prefaced this awful description with the parable of the ten virgins and that of the talents, evidently designed to illustrate man's duty and responsibility to the great Lord of

all. For he concludes these parables by saying, "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." He then, in order to enforce with tenfold energy the preceding admonition, adds, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory : and before him shall be gathered all nations : and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left." We are first reminded of the manner of his coming, which will be transcendently glorious. He will be revealed in his own glorified humanity, irradiated with the overpowering splendour of his godhead, before which the brilliancy of twice ten thousand suns would be eclipsed by the refulgent brightness of its superior light. Add to this the "glory of all his holy angels," which will swell the grandeur and "triumph his train." The apostle Paul says : "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." In another place he says : "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God : and the dead in Christ shall rise first : then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air : and so shall we ever be with the Lord." Hence, "He will come to be glorified in his saints." "Then shall the king say unto those on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." And why

does he welcome them to his presence and to his kingdom? Because they have obeyed the law of love and mercy, and thereby given a practical manifestation of their faith, conversion, and holiness. "For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me." These works of outward mercy must of course include true faith and works of spiritual mercy, but these Christ could not mention. He could not say, for instance, I was ignorant, and ye enlightened me, &c. But such works of faith and labours of love as are necessary to convert sinners and instruct believers are implied in our Lord's congratulation. "Then the righteous shall answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee," &c. "And the king shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." What encouragement we have here to do good unto all men, "but especially to the household of faith;" for "a cup of cold water given to a disciple of Christ," from a pure, benevolent motive, "shall not lose its reward." "Then shall he say also to them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." From which we learn that hell was not originally prepared for man, but for devils; and if men are sent there it is their own fault: the reason is they despise the Saviour, and reject and violate the law of God. For Christ says: "I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and

ye clothed me not : sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not." Like the righteous, they are represented as enquiring when they saw him an hungred, or thirsty, &c., as though they would excuse themselves for neglecting to perform these duties. "Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me." Then follows the dreadful and unalterable sentence—a sentence sufficiently terrible to make the most stupid and hardened tremble—a sentence already past, which dooms and damns to all eternity, and is now being carried into execution. "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment." They are "punished with an everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." 2 Thess. i. 9. They must depart from the presence of Him whom they have slighted, mocked, and despised, with a curse resting on their guilty heads, "into everlasting fire," to associate for ever with the devil and his angels. In this awful sentence the nature as well as the duration of their punishment is described. In another place Christ speaks of the wicked and impenitent as being cast into a lake of fire which burneth with brimstone, and being tormented with the devil and his angels. Hence, in the place where the wicked, subsequent to the judgment day, will be doomed to dwell for ever, there will be no friends, no light, no love, no delightful sounds, no pleasant odours, no charming prospects, to divert their pain for a moment ; nothing sweet to the taste, harmonious to the ear, or animating to the feelings. The brightness of a rising sun will never gild the dismal horizon of that dark region, or chase the gloom of hellish night, to all eternity. It will be one perpetual, everlasting night—



a sable gloom, broken only by the inextinguishable flames of the bottomless pit, which make the horrors of the doleful abode appear more visible and more terrific. No salubrious air will waft in its sunless atmosphere, but suffocating, infernal breezes, followed by

“Ever burning sulphur unconsumed,”

will constitute real and positive torment. We are authorised in using such language, which the reader may consider either figuratively or otherwise, for hell is designated “a lake of fire and brimstone,” and the torment occasioned thereby is such as causes “weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.”

“The guilty wretches tremble alive all o’er,  
They smart and agonize at every pore.”

Milton, in his “Paradise Lost,” book ii., commencing with line 587, gives the following awful description of the damned. How far it is consistent with Scripture, I must leave the intelligent reader to judge for himself:—

“Beyond this flood a frozen continent  
Lies dark and wild, beat with perpetual storms  
Of whirlwind, and dire hail,——the parching air  
Burns froze, and cold performs the effect of fire.  
Thither, by harpy-footed furies hal’d,  
At certain revolutions, all the damn’d  
Are brought; and feel by turns the bitter change  
Of fierce extremes, extremes by change more fierce.  
From beds of raging fire, to starve in ice  
———And there to pine  
Immovable, infix’d, and frozen round  
Periods of time; thence hurried back to fire.”

From these lines it appears that the celebrated poet thought that the miseries of the damned consisted in .

sudden transitions from extreme heat to extreme cold, and *vice versâ*. Dr. A. Clarke seemed to be of the same opinion. Christ says, "There shall be weeping and *gnashing of teeth*." What think you, impenitent reader, of being cast into a burning lake, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched? What think you of spending an immeasurable eternity in *weeping* and *wailing* and *gnashing* your teeth, without the least intermixture of pleasure, or one moment's ease or rest? The taunting Socinian and the sneering sceptic, with a stupid boast, may regard these awful representations as false alarms, calculated only to terrify children and to arouse the fears of weak-minded people; but it is impious to suppose that Christ would use such awful expressions merely to alarm and terrify the weak and credulous. To scoff at the threatening and impending judgments of God, whether under the plausible pretext of superior intellectual attainments, or as the result of ignorance or of sceptical philosophy, is a defiance of Divine Omnipotence and Infinite Justice. But, "can your hands be strong, or your hearts endure, when I shall deal with you, saith the Lord." The question is, Can you match the Almighty? Can you prevail against Omnipotence? Can you conquer the Most High? Alas!

"He who spoke a world from naught,  
At once can crush you down."

The terrible majesty of God, and the manner of His dealing with His enemies, are awfully described by the prophet Nahum (i. 5, 7): "The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his

presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein. Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him. With an over-running flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof, and *darkness shall pursue his enemies.* "For the wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God." "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."

"Behold, the blessed soar to realms above ;  
The curs'd, with hell uncovered to their eye,  
Shake, shriek, and vanish in a whirlwind cry.  
Creation shudders with sublime dismay,  
And in a blazing tempest whirls away !"

"For, behold, the day of the Lord cometh, that shall burn as an oven ; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be as stubble : and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." Mal. iv. 1. While the wicked are thus punished, the righteous will not go unrewarded. When the prophet Isaiah was predicting the destruction of Jerusalem, the complete overthrow of the Jewish polity, and the distress which should prevail on that account, he was instructed by Jehovah to congratulate the righteous in the following language : "Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him : for they shall eat the fruit of their doings." (ch. iii. 10.) This congratulation is applicable to the righteous in relation to the judgment day. At the morning of the resurrection they will rise to inherit glory. And amidst all the horrors of that dire catastrophe

which will destroy the material universe, they will be safely protected by the hand of Omnipotence. They will

“Rise above the fiery void, and smile to see a burning world.”

The awful Judge, who will frown on the wicked and sweep them from his presence with a flood of vengeance, will smile on the righteous while he pronounces the transporting words: “Come, ye blessed of my Father.” You have acknowledged me before men, and now “I will acknowledge you before my Father and his holy angels.” Ye have been despised and persecuted; some of you have died in dungeons, expired on the rack, and have been burned in the flames for my sake; all of you have had to pass through tribulation; “but come, ye blessed;” your warfare is accomplished, your toils are over, the last battle is fought, the final victory is won. Your mortal enemy is swallowed up in victory; and now you are for ever blessed. “Come, ye blessed, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” Ye shall hunger no more, thirst no more, feel sickness and sorrow no more, die no more. Enter into life eternal. Heaven, with all its enjoyments, is yours for ever. “An exceeding and eternal weight of glory” is now your portion. “Come, ye blessed,” and inherit it. “He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son, saith the Lord Almighty.” “And God himself shall be with them, and be their God, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are past away.” Rev. xxi. 3-4. And to this blessed state we are all

invited: First, to prepare for it, and then to inherit it. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life FREELY."









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